UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
3 1761 00900198 3

BUNYAN CHARACTERS

PR
3332
W69

BY JOHN BUNYAN

The Pilgrim's Progress. Small Crown 8vo, on Antique Laid Paper. Cloth Extra, with Frontispiece by Mrs. TRAQUAIR. *Price 2s.*

Cheaper Edition. Small Crown 8vo. Cloth neat, with numerous illustrations. *Price 1s.*

The Holy War. Small Crown 8vo, on Antique Laid Paper. Cloth Extra, with Prefatory Note by the Rev. ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D., and Frontispiece by Mrs. TRAQUAIR. *Price 2s*

Grace Abounding. Small Crown 8vo. Cloth Extra. *Price 1s.*

OLIPHANT ANDERSON AND FERRIER

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MICROFORMED BY
PRESERVATION
SERVICES
DATE DEC 1 8 1991

BUNYAN CHARACTERS

XXVII

IGNORANCE

'I was alive without the law once.'—*Paul.*

'I was now a brisk talker also myself in the matter of religion.'—*Bunyan.*

THIS is a new kind of pilgrim. There are not many pilgrims like this bright brisk youth. A few more young gentlemen like this, and the pilgrimage way would positively soon become fashionable and popular, and be the thing to do. Had you met with this young gentleman in society, had you noticed him beginning to come about your church, you would have lost no time in finding out who he was. I can well believe it, you would have replied. Indeed, I felt sure of it. I must ask him to the house. I was quite struck with his appearance and his manners. Yes; ask him at once to your house; show him some pointed attentions and you will never regret it. For if he goes to the bar and works even decently at his cases, he will be first a sheriff and then a judge in no time. If he should take to politics, he will be an under-secretary before his first parliament is out. And if he takes to the church, which is

not at all unlikely, our West-end congregations will all be competing for him as their junior colleague; and, if he elects either of our Established churches to exercise his profession in it, he will have dined with Her Majesty while half of his class-fellows are still half-starved probationers. Society fathers will point him out with anger to their unsuccessful sons, and society mothers will smile under their eyelids as they see him hanging over their daughters.

Well, as this handsome and well-appointed youth stepped out of his own neat little lane into the rough road on which our two pilgrims were staggering upward, he felt somewhat ashamed to be seen in their company. And I do not wonder. For a greater contrast you would not have seen on any road in all that country that day. He was at your very first sight of him a gentleman and the son of a gentleman. A little over-dressed perhaps; as, also, a little lofty to the two rather battered but otherwise decent enough men who, being so much older than he, took the liberty of first accosting him. 'Brisk' is his biographer's description of him. Feather-headed, flippant, and almost impudent, you might have been tempted to say of him had you joined the little party at that moment. But those two tumbled, broken-winded, and, indeed, broken-hearted old men had been, as an old author says, so emptied from vessel to vessel — they had had a life of such sloughs and stiff climbs — they had been in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness so often — that it was no wonder that their dandiacal companion

walked on a little ahead of them. 'Gentlemen,' his fine clothes and his cane and his head in the air all said to his two somewhat disreputable-looking fellow-travellers,—'Gentlemen, you be utter strangers to me: I know you not. And, besides, I take my pleasure in walking alone, even more a great deal than in company, unless I like it better.' But all his society manners, and all his costly and well-kept clothes, and all his easy and self-confident airs did not impose upon the two wary old pilgrims. They had seen too much of the world, and had been too long mixing among all kinds of pilgrims, young and old, true and false, to be easily imposed upon. Besides, as one could see from their weather-beaten faces, and their threadbare garments, they had found the upward way so dreadfully difficult that they both felt a real apprehension as to the future of this light-hearted and light-headed youth. 'You may find some difficulty at the gate,' somewhat bluntly broke in the oldest of the two pilgrims on their young comrade. 'I shall, no doubt, do at the gate as other good people do,' replied the young gentleman briskly. 'But what have you to show at the gate that may cause that the gate be opened to you?' 'Why, I know my Lord's will, and I have been a good liver all my days, and I pay every man his own. I pray, moreover, and I fast. I pay tithes, and give alms, and have left my country for whither I am going.' Now, before we go further: Do all you young gentlemen do as much as that? Have you always been good livers? Have you paid every man and woman their due?

Do you pray to be called prayer? And, if so, when, and where, and what for, and how long at a time? I do not ask if your private prayer-book is like Bishop Andrewes' *Devotions*, which was so reduced to pulp with tears and sweat and the clenching of his agonising hands that his literary executors were with difficulty able to decipher it. Clito in the *Christian Perfection* was so expeditious with his prayers that he used to boast that he could both dress and do his devotions in a quarter of an hour. What was the longest time you ever took to dress or undress and say your prayers? Then, again, there is another Anglican young gentleman in the same High Church book who always fasts on Good Friday and the Thirtieth of January. Did you ever deny yourself a glass of wine or a cigar or an opera ticket for the church or the poor? Could you honestly say that you know what tithes are? And is there a poor man or woman or child in this whole city who will by any chance put your name into their prayers and praises at bedtime to-night? I am afraid there are not many young gentlemen in this house to-night who could cast a stone at that brisk lad Ignorance, Vain-Hope, door in the side of the hill, and all. He was not far from the kingdom of heaven ; indeed, he got up to the very gate of it. How many of you will get half as far?

Now (what think you?), was it not a very bold thing in John Bunyan, whose own descent was of such a low and inconsiderable generation, his father's house being of that rank that is meanest and most despised of all the families in the land

—was it not almost too bold in such a clown to take such a gentleman-scholar as Saul of Tarsus, the future Apostle of the Lord, and put him into the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and there go on to describe him as a very brisk lad and nickname him with the nickname of Ignorance? For, in knowledge of all kinds to be called knowledge, Gamaliel's gold medallist could have bought the unlettered tinker of Elstow in one end of the market and sold him in the other. And nobody knew that better than Bunyan did. And yet such a lion was he for the truth, such a disciple of Luther was he, and such a defender and preacher of the one doctrine of a standing or falling church, that he fills page after page with the crass ignorance of the otherwise most learned of all the New Testament men. Bunyan does not accuse the rising hope of the Pharisees of school or of synagogue ignorance. That young Hebrew Rabbi knew every jot and tittle of the law of Moses, and all the accumulated traditions of the fathers to boot. But Bunyan has Paul himself with him when he accuses and convicts Saul of an absolutely brutish ignorance of his own heart and hidden nature. That so very brisk lad was always boasting in himself of the day on which he was circumcised, and of the old stock of which he had come; of his tribe, of his zeal, of his blamelessness, and of the profit he had made of his educational and ecclesiastical opportunities. Whereas Bunyan is fain to say of himself in his *Grace Abounding* that he is 'not able to boast of noble blood or of a high-born state according to the flesh. Though, all

things considered, I magnify the Heavenly Majesty for that by this door He brought me into this world to partake of the grace and life that is in Christ by the Gospel.'

As we listen to the conversation that goes on between the two old pilgrims and this smartly appointed youth, we find them striving hard, but without any sign of success, to convince him of some of the things from which he gets his somewhat severe name. For one thing, they at last bluntly told him that he evidently did not know the very A B C about himself. Till, when too hard pressed by the more ruthless of the two old men, the exasperated youth at last frankly burst out: 'I will never believe that my heart is thus bad!' There is a warm touch of Bunyan's own experience here, mixed up with his so dramatic development of Paul's morsels of autobiography that he lets drop in his Epistles to the Philippians and to the Galatians. 'Now was I become godly; now I was become a right honest man. Though as yet I was nothing but a poor painted hypocrite, yet I was proud of my godliness. I read my Bible, but as for Paul's Epistles, and such like Scriptures, I could not away with them; being, as yet, but ignorant both of the corruptions of my nature and of the want and worth of Jesus Christ to save me. The new birth did never enter my mind, neither knew I the deceitfulness and treachery of my own wicked heart. And as for secret thoughts, I took no notice of them.' My brethren, old and young, what do you think of all that? What have you to say to all that? Does all that not open a window and let a

flood of daylight into your own breast? I am sure it does. That is the best portrait of you that ever was painted. Do you not see yourself there as in a glass? And do you not turn with disgust and loathing from the stupid and foolish face? You complain and tell stories about how impostors and cheats and liars have come to your door and have impudently thrust themselves into your innermost rooms; but your own heart, if you only knew it, is deceitful far above them all. Not the human heart as it stands in confessions, and in catechisms, and in deep religious books, but your own heart that beats out its blood-poison of self-deceit, and darkness, and death day and night continually. 'My heart is a good heart,' said that poor ill-brought-up boy, who was already destroyed by his father and his mother for lack of self-knowledge. I entirely grant you that those two old sinners by this time were taking very pessimistic and very melancholy views of human nature, and, therefore, of every human being, young and old. They knew that no language had ever been coined in any scripture, or creed, or catechism, or secret diary of the deepest penitent, that even half uttered their own evil hearts; and they had lived long enough to see that we are all cut out of one web, are all dyed in one vat, and are all corrupted beyond all accusation or confession in Adam's corruption. But how was that poor, mishandled lad to know or believe all that? He could not. It was impossible. 'You go so fast, gentlemen, that I cannot keep pace with you. Go you on before and I will stay a while behind.' Then said Christian to his companion: 'It pities me

much for this poor lad, for it will certainly go ill with him at last.' 'Alas!' said Hopeful, 'there are abundance in our town in his condition: whole families, yea, whole streets, and that of pilgrims too.' Is your family such a family as this? And are you yourself just such a pilgrim as Ignorance was, and are you hastening on to just such an end?

And then, as a consequence, being wholly ignorant of his own corruption and condemnation in the sight of God, this miserable man must remain ignorant and outside of all that God has done in Christ for corrupt and condemned men. 'I believe that Christ died for sinners and that I shall be justified before God from the curse through His gracious acceptance of my obedience to His law. Or, then, to take it this way, Christ makes my duties that are religious acceptable to His Father by virtue of His merits, and so shall I be justified.' Now, I verily believe that nine out of ten of the young men who are here to-night would subscribe that statement and never suspect there was anything wrong with it or with themselves. And yet, what does Christian, who, in this matter, is just John Bunyan, who again is just the word of God—what does the old pilgrim say to this confession of this young pilgrim's faith? 'Ignorance is thy name,' he says, 'and as thy name is, so art thou: even this thy answer demonstrateth what I say. Ignorant thou art of what justifying righteousness is, and as ignorant how to secure thy soul through the faith of it from the heavy wrath of God. Yea, thou also art ignorant of the true effect of saving faith in this righteousness of Christ's, which is to bow and win

over the heart to God in Christ, to love His name, His word, His ways, and His people.' Paul sums up all his own early life in this one word, 'ignorant of God's righteousness.' 'Going about,' he says also, 'to establish our own righteousness, not submitting ourselves to be justified by the righteousness that God has provided with such wisdom and grace, and at such a cost in His Son Jesus Christ.' Now, young men, I defy you to be better born, better brought up, or to have better prospects than Saul of Tarsus had. I defy you to have profited more by all your opportunities and advantages than he had done. I defy you to be more blameless in your opening manhood than he was. And yet it all went like smoke when he got a true sight of himself, and, with that, a true sight of Christ and His justifying righteousness. Read at home to-night, and read when alone, what that great man of God says about all that in his classical epistle to the Philippians, and refuse to sleep till you have made the same submission. And, to-night, and all your days, let *submission,* Paul's splendid submission, be the soul and spirit of all your religious life. Submission to be searched by God's holy law as by a lighted candle: submission to be justified from all that that candle discovers: submission to take Christ as your life and righteousness, sanctification and redemption: and submission of your mind and your will and your heart to Him at all times and in all things. Nay, stay still, and say where you sit, Lord, I submit. I submit on the spot to be pardoned. I submit now to be saved. I submit in all things from this very hour and house of God not any

longer to be mine own, but to be Thine, O God, Thine, Thine, for ever, in Jesus Christ Thy Son and my Saviour!

'But, one day, as I was passing in the field, and that, too, with some dashes in my conscience, fearing lest all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, Thy Righteousness is in heaven! And, methought, I saw with the eyes of my soul Jesus Christ at God's right hand. There, I saw, was my Righteousness. I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my Righteousness better, nor my bad frame of heart that made my Righteousness worse: for my Righteousness was Jesus Christ Himself, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. 'Twas glorious to me to see His exaltation, and the worth and prevalency of His benefits. And that because I could now look from myself to Him and should reckon that all those graces of God that were now green in me were yet but like those crack-groats and fourpence halfpennies that rich men carry in their purses when their gold is in their trunks at home! Oh, I saw that day that my gold was all in my trunk at home! Even in Christ, my Lord and Saviour! Now, Christ was all to me: all my wisdom, all my righteousness, all my sanctification and all my redemption.'

'Methinks in this God speaks,
No tinker hath such power.'

XXVIII

LITTLE-FAITH

'O thou of little faith.'—*Our Lord.*

LITTLE-FAITH, let it never be forgotten, was, all the time, a good man. With all his mistakes about himself, with his sad misadventure, with all his loss of blood and of money, and with his whole after-lifetime of doleful and bitter complaints,—all the time, Little-Faith was all through, in a way, a good man. To keep us right on this all-important point, and to prevent our being prematurely prejudiced against this pilgrim because of his somewhat prejudicial name—because give a dog a bad name, you know, and you had better hang him out of hand at once—because, I say, of this pilgrim's somewhat suspicious name, his scrupulously just, and, indeed, kindly affected biographer says of him, and says it of him not once nor twice, but over and over and over again, that this Little-Faith was really all the time a truly good man. And, more than that, this good man's goodness was not a new thing with him; it was not a thing of yesterday. This man had, happily to begin with, a good father and a good mother. And if there was a good town in all those parts for a boy to be born and brought up in it was surely the town of Sincere. 'Train up a

child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' Well, Little-Faith had been so trained up both by his father and his mother and his schoolmaster and his minister, and he never cost either of them a sore heart or even an hour's sleep. One who knew him well, as well, indeed, as only one young man knows another, has been fain to testify, when suspicions have been cast on the purity and integrity of his youth, that nothing will describe this pilgrim so well in the days of his youth as just those beautiful words out of the New Testament—'an example to all young men in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith even, and in purity'—and that, if there was one young man in all that town of Sincere who kept his garments unspotted it was just our pilgrim of to-night. Yes, said one who had known him all his days, if the child is the father of the man, then Little-Faith, as you so unaccountably to me call him, must have been all along a good man.

It was said long ago in *Vanity Fair* about our present Premier that if he were a worse man he would be a better statesman. Now, I do not repeat that in this place because I agree with it, but because it helps to illustrate, as sometimes a violent paradox will help to illustrate, a truth that does not lie all at once on the surface. But it is no paradox or extravagance or anything but the simple truth to say that if Little-Faith had had more and earlier discoveries made to him of the innate evil of his own heart, even if it had been by that innate evil bursting out of his heart and laying waste his good life, he would either have been driven out of his

little faith altogether or driven into a far deeper faith. Had the commandment come to him in the manner it came to Paul; had it come so as that the sinfulness of his inward nature had revived, as Paul says, under its entrance; then, either his great goodness or his little faith must have there and then died. God's truth and man's goodness cannot dwell together in the same heart. Either the truth will kill the goodness, or the goodness will kill the truth. Little-Faith, in short, was such a good man, and had always been such a good man, and had led such an easy life in consequence, that his faith had not been much exercised, and therefore had not grown, as it must have been exercised and must have grown, had he not been such a good man. In short, and to put it bluntly, had Little-Faith been a worse sinner, he would have been a better saint. '*O felix culpa!*' exclaimed a church father; 'O happy fault, which found for us sinners such a Redeemer.' An apostrophe which Bishop Ken has put into these four bold lines—

> 'What Adam did amiss,
> Turned to our endless bliss;
> O happy sin, which to atone,
> Drew Filial God to leave His throne.'

And John Calvin, the soberest of men, supports Augustine, the most impulsive of men, in saying the same thing. All things which happen to the saints are so overruled by God that what the world regards as evil the issue shows to be good. For what Augustine says is true, that even the sins of saints are, through the guiding providence of God, so far from doing harm to them, that, on the

contrary, they serve to advance their salvation.' And Richard Hooker, a theologian, if possible, still more judicious than even John Calvin, says on this same subject and in support of the same great father, 'I am not afraid to affirm it boldly with St. Augustine that men puffed up through a proud opinion of their own sanctity and holiness receive a benefit at the hands of God, and are assisted with His grace, when with His grace they are not assisted, but permitted, and that grievously, to transgress. Ask the very soul of Peter, and it shall undoubtedly make you itself this answer: My eager protestations, made in the glory of my ghostly strength, I am ashamed of; but those crystal tears, wherewith my sin and weakness were bewailed, have procured my endless joy: my strength hath been my ruin, and my fall my stay.' And our own Samuel Rutherford is not likely to be left far behind by the best of them when the grace of God is to be magnified. 'Had sin never been we should have wanted the mysterious Emmanuel, the Beloved, the Chief among ten thousand, Christ, God-man, the Saviour of sinners. For, no sick sinners, no soul-physician of sinners; no captive, no Redeemer; no slave of hell, no lovely ransom-payer of heaven. Mary Magdalene with her seven devils, Paul with his hands smoking with the blood of the saints, and with his heart sick with malice and blasphemy against Christ and His Church, and all the rest of the washen ones whose robes are made fair in the blood of the Lamb, and all the multitude that no man can number in that best of lands, are all but bits of free grace. O what a depth of unsearchable

wisdom to contrive that lovely plot of free grace. Come, all intellectual capacities, and warm your hearts at this fire. Come, all ye created faculties, and smell the precious ointment of Christ. Oh come, sit down under His shadow and eat the apples of life. Oh that angels would come, and generations of men, and wonder, and admire, and fall down before the unsearchable wisdom of this gospel-art of the unsearchable riches of Christ!' And always pungent Thomas Shepard of New England: 'You shall find this, that there is not any carriage or passage of the Lord's providence toward thee but He will get a name to Himself, first and last, by it. Hence you shall find that those very sins that dishonour His name He will even by them get Himself a better name; for so far will they be from casting you out of His love that He will actually do thee good by them. Look and see if it is not so with thee? Doth not thy weakness strengthen thee like Paul? Doth not thy blindness make thee cry for light? And hath not God out of darkness oftentimes brought light? Thou hast felt venom against Christ and thy brother, and thou hast on that account loathed thyself the more. Thy falls into sin make thee weary of it, watchful against it, long to be rid of it. And thus He makes thy poison thy food, thy death thy life, thy damnation thy salvation, and thy very greatest enemies thy very best friends. And hence Mr. Fox said that he thanked God more for his sins than for his good works. And the reason is, God will have His name.' And, last, but not least, listen to our old acquaintance, James Fraser of

Brea: 'I find advantages by my sins: "*Peccare nocet, peccavisse vero juvat.*" I may say, as Mr. Fox said, my sins have, in a manner, done me more good than my graces. Grace and mercy have more abounded where sin had much abounded. I am by my sins made much more humble, watchful, revengeful against myself. I am made to see a greater need to depend more upon Him and to love Him the more. I find that true which Shepard says, "sin loses strength by every new fall."' Have you followed all that, my brethren? Or have you stumbled at it? Do you not understand it? Does your superficial gin-horse mind incline to shake its empty head over all this? I know that great names, and especially the great names of your own party, go much farther with you than the truth goes, and therefore I have sheltered this deep truth under a shield of great names. For their sakes let this sure truth of God's best saints lie in peace and undisputed beside you till you arrive to understand it.

But, to proceed,—the thing was this. At this passage there comes down from Broadway-gate a lane called Dead-Man's-lane, so called because of the murders that are commonly done there. And this Little-Faith going on pilgrimage, as we now do, chanced to sit down there and fell fast asleep. Yes; the thing was this: This good man had never been what one would call really awake. He was not a bad man, as men went in the town of Sincere, but he always had a half-slept half-awakened look about his eyes, till now, at this most unfortunate spot, he fell stone-dead asleep. You all know, I shall sup-

pose, what the apostle Paul and John Bunyan mean by sleep, do you not? You all know, at any rate, to begin with, what sleep means in the accident column of the morning papers. You all know what sleep meant and what it involved and cost in the Thirsk signal-box the other night.[1] When a man is asleep, he is as good as dead, and other people are as good as dead to him. He is dead to duty, to danger, to other people's lives, as well as to his own. He may be having pleasant dreams, and may even be laughing aloud in his sleep, but that may only make his awaking all the more hideous. He may awake just in time, or he may awake just too late. Only, he is asleep and he neither knows nor cares. Now, there is a sleep of the soul as well as of the body. And as the soul is in worth, as the soul is in its life and in its death to the body, so is its sleep. Many of you sitting there are quite as dead to heaven and hell, to death and judgment, and to what a stake other people as well as yourselves have in your sleep as that poor sleeper in the signal-box was dead to what was coming rushing on him through the black night. And as all his gnashing of teeth at himself, and all his sobs before his judge and before the laid-out dead, and before distracted widows and half-mad husbands did not bring back that fatal moment when he fell asleep so sweetly, so will it be with you. Lazarus! come forth! Wise and foolish virgins both: Behold the Bridegroom cometh! Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!

And, with that, Guilt with a great club that was in

[1] Delivered November 27th, 1892.

his hand struck Little-Faith on the head, and with that blow felled him to the earth, where he lay bleeding as one that would soon bleed to death. Yes, yes, all true to the very life. A man may be the boast and the example of all the town, and yet, unknown to them all, and all but unknown to himself till he is struck down, he may have had guilt enough on his track all the time to lay him half dead at the mouth of Dead-Man's-lane. Good as was the certificate that all men in their honesty gave to Little-Faith, yet even he had some bad enough memories behind him and within him had he only kept them ever present with him. But, then, it was just this that all along was the matter with Little-Faith. Till, somehow, after that sad and yet not wholly evil sleep, all his past sins leapt out into the light and suddenly became and remained all the rest of his life like scarlet. So loaded, indeed, was the club of Guilt with the nails and studs and clamps of secret aggravation, that every nail and stud left its own bleeding bruise in the prostrate man's head. I have myself, says the narrator of Little-Faith's story, I have myself been engaged as he was, and I found it to be a terrible thing. I would, as the saying is, have sold my life at that moment for a penny; but that, as God would have it, I was clothed with armour of proof: ay, and yet though I was thus harnessed, I found it hard work to quit myself like a man. No man can tell what in that combat attends us but he that hath been in the battle himself. Great-Grace himself,—whoso looks well upon his face shall see those cuts and scars that shall easily give demonstration of what I say.

Most unfortunately there was no good Samaritan with his beast on the road that day to take the half-dead man to an inn. And thus it was that Little-Faith was left to lie in his blood till there was almost no more blood left in him. Till at last, coming a little to himself, he made a shift to scrabble on his way. When he was able to look a little to himself, besides all his wounds and loss of blood, he found that all his spending money was gone, and what was he to do, a stranger in such a plight on a strange road? There was nothing for it but he must just beg his way with many a hungry belly for the remainder of his way. You all understand the parable at this point? Our knowledge of gospel truth; our personal experience of the life of God in our own soul; our sensible attainments in this grace of the Spirit and in that; in secret prayer, in love to God, in forgiveness of injuries, in good-will to all men, and in self-denial that no one knows of,—in things like these we possess what may be called the pocket-money of the spiritual life. All these things, at their best, are not the true jewel that no thief can break through nor steal; but though they are not our best and truest riches, yet they have their place and play their part in sending us up the pilgrim way. By our long and close study of the word of God, if that is indeed our case; by divine truth dwelling richly and experimentally in our hearts; and by a hidden life that is its own witness, and which always has the Holy Spirit's seal set upon it that we are the children of God,—all that keeps, and is designed by God to keep our hearts up amid the labours and the faintings, the hopes and the fears of the spiritual

life. All that keeps us at the least and the worst above famine and beggary. Now, the whole pity with Little-Faith was, that though he was not a bad man, yet he never, even at his best days, had much of those things that make a good and well-furnished pilgrim; and what little he had he had now clean lost. He had never been much a reader of his Bible; he had never sat over it as other men sat over their news-letters and their romances. He had never had much taste or talent for spiritual books of any kind. He was a good sort of man, but he was not exactly the manner of man on whose broken heart the Holy Ghost sets the broad seal of heaven. But for his dreadful misadventure, he might have plodded on, a decent, humdrum, commonplace, every-day kind of pilgrim; but when that catastrophe fell on him he had nothing to fall back upon. The secret ways of faith and love and hope were wholly unknown to him. He had no practice in importunate prayer. He had never prayed a whole night all his life. He had never needed to do so. For were we not told when we first met him what a blameless and pure and true and good man he had always been? He did not know how to find his way about in his Bible; and as for the maps and guide-books that some pilgrims never let out of their hand, even when he had some spending money about him, he never laid it out that way. And a more helpless pilgrim than Little-Faith was all the rest of the way you never saw. He was forced to beg as he went, says his historian. That is to say, he had to lean upon and look to wiser and better-furnished men than himself. He had to share their

meals, look to them to pay his bills, keep close to their company, walk in their foot-prints, and at night borrow their oil, and it was only in this poor dependent way that Little-Faith managed to struggle on to the end of his dim and joyless journey.

It would have been far more becoming and far more profitable if Christian and Hopeful, instead of falling out of temper and calling one another bad names over the sad case of Little-Faith, had tried to tell one another why that unhappy pilgrim's faith was so small, and how both their own faith and his might from that day have been made more. Hopeful, for some reason or other, was in a rude and boastful mood of mind that day, and Christian was more tart and snappish than we have ever before seen him; and, altogether, the opportunity of learning something useful out of Little-Faith's story has been all but lost to us. But, now, since there are so many of Little-Faith's kindred among ourselves—so many good men who are either half asleep in their religious life or are begging their way from door to door—let them be told, in closing, one or two out of many other ways in which their too little faith may possibly be made stronger and more fruitful.

Well, then, faith, like everything else, once we have it, grows greater by our continual exercise of it. Exercise, then, intentionally and seriously and on system your faith every day. And exercise it habitually and increasingly on your Bible, on heaven, and on Jesus Christ. And let your faith on all these things, and places, and persons, work by love,—by love and

by imagination. Our love is cold and our faith is small and weak for lack of imagination. Read your Psalm, your Gospel, your Epistle every morning and every night with your eye upon the object. Think you see the Psalmist amid all his deep and divine experiences. Think you see Jesus Christ speaking His parables, saying His prayers, and doing His good works. Walk up and down with Him, observing His manner, His look, His gait, His divinity in your humanity, till Galilee and Jerusalem become Scotland and Edinburgh; that is, till He is as much with you, and more, than He was with Peter and James and John. Never close your eye a single night till you have again laid your hand on the very head of the Lamb of God, and till you feel that your sin and guilt have all passed off your hand and on upon His head. And never rise without, like William Law, saluting the rising sun in the name of God, as if he had just been created and sent up into your sky to let you see to serve God and your neighbour for another day. And be often out of this world and up in heaven. Beat all about you at building castles in the air; you have more material and more reason. For is not faith the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen? Walk often in heaven's friendly streets. Pass often into heaven's many mansions filled with happy families. Imagine this unhappy life at an end, and imagine yourself sent back to this probationary world to play the man for a few short years before heaven finally calls you home. Little-Faith was a good man, but there was no speculation in his eyes and no secrets of love in his

heart. And if your faith also is little, and your spending money also is run low, try this way of love and imagination. If you have a better way, then go on with it and be happy yourself and helpful to others; but if your faith is at a standstill and is stricken with barrenness, try my counsel of putting more heart and more inward eye, more holy love and more heavenly joy, into your frigid and sterile religion.

XXIX

THE FLATTERER

'A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.'—*The Wise Man.*

BOTH Ignorance and Little-Faith would have had their revenge and satisfaction upon Christian and Hopeful had they seen those two so Pharisaical old men taken in the Flatterer's net. For it was nothing else but the swaggering pride of Hopeful over the pitiful case of Little-Faith, taken along with the hard and hasty ways of Christian with that unhappy youth Ignorance, that so soon laid them both down under the small cords of the Shining One. This word of the wise man, that pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall, was fulfilled to the very letter in Christian and Hopeful that high-minded day. At the same time, it must be admitted that Christian and Hopeful would have been more than human if they had not both felt and let fall some superiority, some scorn, and some impatience in the presence of such a silly and upsetting stripling as Ignorance was; as, also, over the story of such a poor-spirited and sponging creature as Little-Faith was. Christian and Hopeful had just come down from their delightful time among the Delectable Mountains,

and they were as full as they could hold of all kinds of knowledge, and faith, and hope, and assurance; when, most unfortunately, as it turned out, they first came across Ignorance, and then, after quarrelling with him, they fell out between themselves over the case of Little-Faith. Their superior knowledge of the truth, and their superior strength of faith, ought to have made them more able to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and with the passing moods, however provoking, of one another. But no. And their impatience and contempt and bad temper all came at this crisis to such a head with them that they could only be cured by the small cords and the stinging words of the Shining One. The true key to this so painful part of the parable hangs at our own girdle. We who have been born and brought up in an evangelical church are thrown from time to time into the company of men—ministers and people—who have not had our advantages and opportunities. They have been born, baptized, and brought up in communities and churches the clean opposite of ours; and they are as ignorant of all New Testament religion as Ignorance himself was; or, on the other hand, they are as full of superstition and terror and spiritual starvation as Little-Faith was. And then, instead of recollecting and laying to heart Who made us to differ from such ignorance and such unbelief, and thus putting on love and humility and patience toward our neighbours, we speak scornfully and roughly to them, and boast ourselves over them, and as good as say to them, Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am wiser, wider-minded, stronger,

and better every way than thou. And then, ere ever we are aware of what we are doing, we have let the arch-flatterer of religious superiority and of spiritual pride seduce us aside out of the lowly and heavenly way of love and humility till we are again brought back to it with rebukes of conscience and with other chastisements. You all understand, my brethren, that the man black of flesh but covered with a white robe was no wayside seducer who met Christian and Hopeful at that dangerous part of the road only, and only on that high-minded day. You know from yourselves surely that both Christian and Hopeful carried that black but smooth-spoken man within themselves. The Flatterer who led the two pilgrims so fatally wrong that day was just their own heart taken out of their own bosom and personified and dramatised by Bunyan's dramatic genius, and so made to walk and talk and flatter and puff up outside of themselves till they came again to see who in reality he was and whence he came,—that is to say, till they were brought to see what they themselves still were, and would always be, when they were left to themselves. 'Where did you lie last night? asked the Shining One with the whip. With the Shepherds on the Delectable Mountains, they answered. He asked them then if they had not of those shepherds a note of direction for the way? They answered, Yes. But did you not, said he, when you were at a stand pluck out and read your note? They answered, No. He asked them why? They said they forgot. He asked, moreover if the shepherds did not bid them beware of the Flatterer? They answered, Yes;

but we did not imagine, said they, that this fine-spoken man had been he.'

All good literature, both sacred and profane, both ancient and modern, is full of the Flatterer. Let me not, protests Elihu in his powerful speech in the book of Job, let me not accept any man's person; neither let me give flattering titles unto man, lest in so doing my Maker should soon take me away. And the Psalmist in his powerful description of the wicked men of his day: There is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue. And again: They speak with flattering lips, and with a double heart do they speak. But the Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things. 'The perpetual hyperbole' of pure love becomes in the lips of impure love the impure bait that leads the simple ones astray on the streets of the city as seen and heard by the wise man out of his casement. My son, say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister, and call understanding thy kinswoman; that they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth thee with her words, which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. And then in the same book of Hebrew aphorisms we find this text which Bunyan puts on the margin of the page: 'A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.' And now, before we leave the ancient world, if you would not think it beneath the dignity of the place we are in, I would like to read to you a passage out of a round-about paper

written by a satirist of Greece about the time of Ezra and Nehemiah in Jerusalem. You will easily remark the difference of tone between the seriousness and pathos of the Hebrew prophet and the light and chaffing touch of Theophrastus. 'The Flatterer is a person,' says that satirist of Greek society, 'who will say to you as he walks with you, "Do you observe how people are looking at you? This happens to no man in Athens but to you. A fine compliment was paid you yesterday in the Porch. More than thirty persons were sitting there when the question was started, Who is our foremost man? Every one mentioned you first, and ended by coming back to your name." The Flatterer will laugh also at your stalest joke, and will stuff his cloak into his mouth as if he could not repress his amusement when you again tell it. He will buy apples and pears and will give to your children when you are by, and will kiss them all and will say, "Chicks of a good father." Also, when he assists at the purchase of slippers he will declare that the foot is more shapely than the shoe. He is the first of the guests to praise the wine and to say as he reclines next the host, "How delicate your fare always is"; and taking up something from the table, "Now, how excellent that is!"' And so on. Yes, we have heard it all over and over again in Modern Athens also. The Greek fable also of the fox and the crow and the piece of cheese is only another illustration of the truth that the God of truth and integrity never left Himself without a witness. Our own literature also is scattered full of the Flatterer and his too

willing dupes. 'Of praise a mere glutton,' says Goldsmith of David Garrick, 'he swallowed what came. The puff of a dunce he mistook it for fame.' 'Delicious essence,' exclaims Sterne, 'how refreshing thou art to poor human nature! How sweetly dost thou mix with the blood, and help it through the most difficult and tortuous passages to the heart.' 'He that slanders me,' says Cowper, 'paints me blacker than I am, and he that flatters me whiter. They both daub me, and when I look in the glass of conscience, I see myself disguised by both.' And then he sings:

> 'The worth of these three kingdoms I defy
> To lure me to the baseness of a lie;
> And of all lies (be that one poet's boast),
> The lie that flatters I abhor the most.'

Now, praise, which is one of the best and sweetest things in human life, so soon passes over into flattery, which is one of the worst things, that something must here be said and laid to heart about praise also. But, to begin with, praise itself must first be praised. There is nothing nobler than true praise in him who speaks it, and there is nothing dearer and sweeter to him who hears it. God Himself inhabits the praises of Israel. All God's works praise Him. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me. Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Zion. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. And such also is all true

praise between man and man. How deliciously sweet is praise! How we labour after it! how we look for it and wait for it! and how we languish and die if we do not get it! Again, when it comes to us, how it cheers us up and makes our face to shine! For a long time after it our step is so swift on the street and our face beams so that all men can quite well see what has come to us. Praise is like wine in our blood; it is new life to our fainting heart. So much is this the case that a salutation of praise is to be our first taste of heaven itself. It will wipe all tears off our eyes when we hear our Lord saying to us, 'Well done!' when all our good works that we have done in the body shall be found unto praise and honour and glory in the great day of Jesus Christ.

At the same time, this same love of praise is one of our most besetting and fatal temptations as long as we are in this false and double and deceptive world. Sin, God curse it! has corrupted and poisoned everything, the very best things of this life, and when the best things are corrupted and poisoned they become the worst things. And praise does not escape this universal and fatal law. Weak, evil, and self-seeking men are near us, and we lean upon them, look to them, and listen to them. We make them our strength and support, and seek repose and refreshment from them. They cannot be all or any of these things to us; but we are far on in life, we are done with life, before we have discovered that and will admit that. Most men never discover and admit that till they are out of this life altogether. Christ's praise and the

applause of His saints and angels are so future and so far away from us, and man's praise and the applause of this world, hollow and false as it is, is so near us, that we feed our souls on offal and garbage, when, already, in the witness of a good conscience, we might be feasting our souls on the finest of the wheat, and satisfying them with honey out of the rock. And, then, this insatiable appetite of our hearts, being so degraded and perverted, like all degraded and perverted appetites, becomes an iron-fast slave to what it feeds upon. What miserable slaves we all are to the approval and the praise of men! How they hold us in their bondage! How we lick their hands and sit up on our haunches and go through our postures for a crumb! How we crawl on our belly and lick their feet for a stroke and a smile! What a hound's life does that man lead who lives upon the approval and the praise and the patronage of men! What meanness fills his mind; what baseness fills his heart! What a shameful leash he is led about the world in! How kicked about and spat upon he is; while not half so much as he knows all the time that he deserves to be! Better far be a dog at once and bay the moon than be a man and fawn upon the praises of men.

If you would be a man at all, not to speak of a Christian man, starve this appetite till you have quite extirpated it. You will never be safe from it as long as it stirs within you. Extirpate it! Extirpate it! You will never know true self-respect and you will never deserve to know it, till you have wholly extirpated your appetite for praise.

Put your foot upon it, put it out of your heart. Stop fishing for it, and when you see it coming, turn away and stop your ears against it. And should it still insinuate itself, at any rate do not repeat to others what has already so flattered and humbled and weakened you. Telling it to others will only humble and weaken you more. By repeating the praise that you have heard or read about yourself you only expose yourself and purchase well-deserved contempt for yourself. And, more than that, by fishing for praise you lay yourself open to all sorts of flatterers. Honest men, men who truly respect and admire you, will show you their dignified regard and appreciation of you and your work by their silence; while your leaky slaves will crowd around you with floods of praise that they know well will please and purchase you. And when you cannot with all your arts squeeze a drop out of those who love and honour you, gallons will be poured upon you by those who have respect neither for themselves nor for you. Faugh! Flee from flatterers, and take up only with sternly true and faithful men. 'I am much less regardful,' says Richard Baxter, 'of the approbation of men, and set much lighter store by their praise and their blame, than I once did. All worldly things appear most vain and unsatisfying to those who have tried them most. But while I feel that this has had some hand in my distaste for man's praise, yet it is the increasing impression on my heart of man's nothingness and God's transcendent greatness; it is the brevity and vanity of all earthly things, taken along with the nearness of eternity;—it is all this

that has at last lifted me above the blame and the praise of men.'

To conclude; let us make up our mind and determine to pass on to God on the spot every syllable of praise that ever comes to our eyes or our ears—if, in this cold, selfish, envious, and grudging world, any syllable of praise ever should come to us. Even if pure and generous and well-deserved praise should at any time come to us, all that does not make it ours. The best earned usury is not the steward's own money to do with it what he likes. The principal and the interest, and the trader too, are all his master's. And, more than that, after the wisest and the best trader has done his best, he will remain, to himself at least, a most unprofitable servant. Pass on then immediately, dutifully, and to its very last syllable, to God all the praise that comes to you. Wash your hands of it and say, Not unto us, O God, not unto us, but unto Thy name. And then, to take the most selfish and hungry-hearted view of this whole matter, what you thus pass on to God as not your own but His, He will soon, and in a better and safer world, return again to the full with usury to you, and you again to God, and He again to you, and so on, all down the pure and true and sweet and blessed life of heaven.

XXX

ATHEIST

'. . . without God [literally, atheists] in the world.'—*Paul.*

' ONDER is a man with his back toward Zion, and he is coming to meet us. So he drew nearer and nearer, and at last came up to them. His name was Atheist, and he asked them whither they were going? We are going to the Mount Zion, they answered. Then Atheist fell into a very great laughter. What is the meaning of your laughter? they asked. I laugh to see what ignorant persons you are to take upon you so tedious a journey, and yet are like to have nothing but your travel for your pains. Why, man? Do you think we shall not be received? they said. Received! There is no such place as you dream of in all this world. But there is in the world to come, replied Christian. When I was at home, Atheist went on, in mine own country I heard as you now affirm, and, from that hearing, I went out to see, and have been seeking this city you speak of this twenty years, but find no more of it than I did the first day I set out. And, still laughing, he went his way.'

Having begun to tell us about Atheist, why did Bunyan not tell us more? We would have thanked him warmly to-night for a little more about this unhappy man. Why did the dreamer not take an-

other eight or ten pages in order to tell us, as only he could have told us, how this man that is now Atheist had spent his past twenty years seeking Mount Zion? Those precious unwritten pages are now buried in John Strudwick's vault in Bunhill Fields, and no other man has arisen able to handle Bunyan's biographic pen. Had Bunyan but put off the entrance of Christian and Hopeful into the city till he had told us something more about the twenty years it had taken this once earnest pilgrim to become an atheist, how valuable an interpolation that would have been! What was it that made this man to set out so long ago for the Celestial City? What was it that so stoutly determined him to leave off all his old companions and turn his back on the sweet refreshments of his youth? How did he do at the Slough of Despond? Did he come that way? What about the Wicket Gate, and the House Beautiful, and the Interpreter's House, and the Delectable Mountains? What men, and especially what women, did he meet and converse with on his way? What were his fortunes, and what his misfortunes? How much did he lay out at Vanity Fair, and on what? At what point of his twenty years' way did his youthful faith begin to shake, and his youthful love begin to become lukewarm? And what was it that at last made him quite turn round his back on Zion and his face to his own country? I cannot forgive Bunyan to-night for not telling us the story of Atheist's conversion, his pilgrimage, and his apostasy in full.

At the same time, though it cannot be denied that Bunyan has lost at this point a great oppor-

tunity for his genius and for our advantage,—at the same time, he undoubtedly did a very courageous thing in introducing Atheist at all; and, especially, in introducing him to us and making him laugh so loudly at us when we are on the very borders of the land of Beulah. A less courageous writer, and a writer less sure of his ground, would have left out Atheist altogether; or, if he had felt constrained to introduce him, would have introduced him at any other period of our history rather than at this period. Under other hands than Bunyan's we would have met with this mocking reprobate just outside the City of Destruction; or, perhaps, among the booths of Vanity Fair; or, indeed, anywhere but where we now meet him. And, that our greater-minded author does not let loose the laughter of Atheist upon us till we are almost out of the body is a stroke of skill and truth and boldness that makes us glad indeed that we possess such a sketch at Bunyan's hand at all, all too abrupt and all too short as that sketch is. In the absence, then, of a full-length and finished portrait of Atheist, we must be content to fall back on some of the reflections and lessons that the mere mention of his name, the spot he passes us on, and the ridicule of his laughter, all taken together, awaken in our minds. One rapid stroke of such a brush as that of John Bunyan conveys more to us than a full-length likeness, with all the strongest colours, of any other artist would be able to do.

1. One thing the life-long admiration of John Bunyan's books has helped to kindle and burn into my mind and my imagination is this: What a uni-

verse of things is the heart of man! Were there nothing else in the heart of man but all the places and all the persons and all the adventures that John Bunyan saw in his sleep, what a world that would open up in all our bosoms! All the pilgrims, good and bad—they, or the seed and possibility of them all, are all in your heart and in mine. All the cities, all the roads that lead from one city to another, with all the paths and all the by-paths,—all the adventures, experiences, endurances, conflicts, overthrows, victories,—all are within us and never are to be seen anywhere else. Heaven and hell, God and the devil, life and death, salvation and damnation, time and eternity, all are within us. 'There is no Mount Zion in all this world,' bellowed out this blinded fool. 'No; I know that quite well,' quickly responded Christian; 'but there is in the world to come.' He would have said the whole truth, and he would have been entirely right, had he taken time to add, 'and in the world within.' 'And more,' he should have said to Atheist, 'much more in the world within than in any possible world to come.' The Celestial City, every Sabbath-school child begins gradually to understand, is not up among the stars; till, as he grows older, he takes in the whole of the New Testament truth that the kingdom of heaven is wholly within him. You all understand, my brethren, that were we swept in a moment up to the furthest star, by all that infinite flight we would not be one hair's-breadth nearer the heavenly city. That is not the right direction to that city. The city whose builder and maker is God lies in quite a different direction from that

altogether; not by ascending up beyond sun and moon and stars to all eternity would we ever get one hand's-breadth nearer God. But if you deny yourself sleep to-night till you have read His book and bowed your knees in His closet; if, for His sake, you deny yourself to-morrow when you are eating and drinking; as often as you say, 'Not my will, but Thine be done'; as often as you humble yourself when others exalt themselves; as often as you refuse praise and despise blame for His sake; as often as you forgive before God your enemy, and rejoice with your friend,—Behold! the kingdom of heaven, with its King and all His shining court of angels and saints is around you;—is, indeed, within you. No; there is no such place. Heaven is not in any place: heaven is in a person where it is at all; and you are that person as often as you put off an earthly and put on a heavenly mind. That mocking reprobate, with his secret heart all through those twenty years hungering after the lusts of his youth,—he was wholly right in what he so unintentionally said; there is no such place in all this world. And, even if there were, it would spue him and all who are like him out of its mouth.

2. And, then, in all that universe of things that fills that bottomless pit and shoreless sea the human heart, there is nothing deeper down in it than just its deep and unsearchable atheism. The very deepest thing, and the most absolutely inexpugnable thing, in every human heart is its theism; its original and inextinguishable convictions about itself and about God. But, all but as deep as that—for all around that, and all over that, and soaking

all through that—there lies a superincumbent mass of sullen, brutish, malignant atheism. Nay, so deep down is the atheism of all our hearts, that it is only one here and another there of the holiest and the ripest of God's saints who ever get down to it, or even get at their deepest within sight of it. Robert Fleming tells us about Robert Bruce, that he was a man that had much inward exercise about his own personal case, and had been often assaulted anent that great foundation truth, if there was a God. And often, when he had come up to the pulpit, after being some time silent, which was his usual way, he would say, 'I think it is a great matter to believe there is a God'; telling the people that it was another thing to believe that than they judged. But it was also known to his friends what extraordinary confirmations he had from the Lord therein, and what near familiarity he did attain to in his heart-converse with God: Yea, truly, adds Fleming, some things I have had thereanent that seem so strange and marvellous that I forbear to set them down. And in Halyburton's priceless *Memoirs* we read: 'Hereby I was brought into a doubt about the truths of religion, the being of God, and things eternal. Whenever I was in dangers or straits and would build upon these things, a suspicion secretly haunted me, what if the things are not? This perplexity was somewhat eased while one day I was reading how Robert Bruce was shaken about the being of God, and how at length he came to the fullest satisfaction.' And in another place: 'Some days ago reading Ex. ix. and x., and finding this, 'That ye may know that I am God' frequently

repeated, and elsewhere in passages innumerable, as the end of God's manifesting Himself in His word and works; I observe from it that atheism is deeply rooted even in the Lord's people, seeing they need to be taught this so much. The great difficulty that the whole of revelation has to grapple with is atheism; its whole struggle is to recover man to his first impressions of a God. This one point comprehends the whole of man's recovery, just as atheism is the whole of man's apostasy.' And, again, in another part of the same great book, Halyburton says: 'I must observe, also, the wise providence of God, that the greatest difficulties that lie against religion are hid from atheists. All the objections I meet with in their writings are not nearly so subtle as those which are often suggested to myself. The reason of this is obvious from the very nature of the thing—such persons take not a near-hand view of religion; and while persons stand at a distance neither are the advantages nor the difficulties of religion discerned.' And now listen to Bunyan, that arch-atheist: 'Whole floods of blasphemies both against God, Christ, and the Scriptures were poured upon my spirit, to my great confusion and astonishment. Against the very being of God and of His only beloved Son; or, whether there were, in truth, a God and a Christ, or no. Of all the temptations that ever I met with in my life, to question the being of God and the truth of the Gospel is the worst, and the worst to be borne. When this temptation comes it takes away my girdle from me, and removeth the foundation from under me.'

'Fool, said my Muse to me, look in thy heart and write.'

And John Bunyan looked into his own deep and holy heart, and out of it he composed this incident of Atheist.

3. It may not be out of place at this point to look for a moment at some of the things that agitate, stir up, and make the secret atheism of our hearts to fluctuate and overflow. Butler has a fine passage in which he points out that it is only the higher class of minds that are tempted with speculative difficulties such as those were that assaulted Christian and Hopeful after they were so near the end of their journey. Coarse, common-place, and mean-minded men have their probation appointed them among coarse, mean, and commonplace things; whereas enlightened, enlarged, and elevated men are exercised after the manner of Robert Bruce, Thomas Halyburton, John Bunyan, and Butler himself. 'The chief temptations of the generality of the world are the ordinary motives to injustice or unrestrained pleasure; but there are other persons without this shallowness of temper; persons of a deeper sense as to what is invisible and future. Now, these persons have their moral discipline set them in that high region.' The profound bishop means that while their appetites and their tempers are the stumbling-stones of the most of men, the difficult problems of natural and revealed and experimental religion are the test and the triumph of other men. As we have just seen in the men mentioned above. Students, whose temptations lie fully as much in their intellects as in their senses, should buy (for a few pence) Halyburton's *Memoirs*. 'With Halyburton,' says Dr. John Duncan, 'I feel

great intellectual congruity. Halyburton was naturally a sceptic, but God gave that sceptic great faith.'

Then, again, what Atheist calls the 'tediousness' of the journey has undoubtedly a great hand in making some half-in-earnest men sceptics, if not scoffers. Many of us here to-night who can never now take this miserable man's way out of the tedium of the Christian life, yet most bitterly feel it. Whether that tedium is inherent in that life, and inevitable to such men as we are who are attempting that life; how far that feature belongs to the very essence of the pilgrim life, and how far we import our own tedium into the pilgrimage; the fact remains as Atheist puts it. As Atheist in this book says, so the Atheist who is in our hearts often says: We are like to have nothing for all our pains but a lifetime of tedious travel. Yes, wherever the blame lies, there can be no doubt about it, that what this hilarious scoffer calls the tediousness of the way is but a too common experience among many of those who, tediousness and all, will still cleave fast to it and will never leave it.

Then, again, great trials in life, great straits, dark and too-long-continued providences, prayer unanswered, or not yet answered in the way we dictate, bad men and bad causes growing like a green bay tree, and good men and good work languishing and dying; these things, and many more things such as these, of which this world of faith and patience is full, prove quite too much for some men till they give themselves up to a state of mind that is nothing better than atheism. 'My

evidences and my certainty,' says Halyburton, 'were not answerable to the weight I was compelled to lay upon them.' A figure which Goodwin in his own tender and graphic way takes up thus: 'Set pins in a wall and fix them in ever so loosely, yet, if you hang nothing upon them they will seem to stand firm; but hang a heavy weight upon them, or even give them the least jog as you pass, and the whole thing will suddenly come down. The wall is God's word, the slack pin is our faith, and the weight and the jog are the heavy burdens and the sudden shocks of life, and down our hearts go, wall and pin and suspended vessel and all.

When the church and her ministers, when the Scriptures and their anomalies, and when the faults and failings of Christian men are made the subject of mockery and laughter, the reverence, the fear, the awe, the respect that all enter so largely into religion, and especially into the religion of young people, is too easily destroyed; and not seldom the first seeds of practical and sometimes of speculative atheism are thus sown. The mischief that has been done by mockery and laughter to the souls, especially of the young and the inexperienced, only the great day will fully disclose.

And then, two men of great weight and authority with us, tell us what we who are ministers would have found out without them: this, namely, that the greatest atheists are they who are ever handling holy things without feeling them.

'Is it true,' said Christian to Hopeful, his fellow, is it true what this man hath said?' 'Take heed,' said Hopeful, 'remember what it hath cost us

already for hearkening to such kind of fellows. What! No Mount Zion! Did we not see from the Delectable Mountains the gate of the City? And, besides, are we not to walk by faith? Let us go on lest the man with the whip overtakes us again.' Christian: 'My brother, I said that but to prove thee, and to fetch from thee a fruit of the honesty of thy heart.' Many a deep and powerful passage has Butler composed on that thesis which Hopeful here supplies him with; and many a brilliant sermon has Newman preached on that same text till he has made our 'predispositions to faith' a fruitful and an ever fresh commonplace to hundreds of preachers. Yes; the best bulwark of faith is a good and honest heart. To such a happy heart the truth is its own unshaken evidence. To whom can we go but to Thee?—they who have such a heart protest. The whole bent of such men's minds is toward the truth of the gospel. Their instincts keep them on the right way even when their reason and their observation are both confounded. As Newman keeps on saying, they are 'easy of belief.' They cannot keep away from Christ and His church. They cannot turn back. They must go on. Though He slay them they will die yearning after Him. They often fall into great error and into great guilt, but their seed remaineth in them, and they cannot continue in error or in guilt, because they are born of God. They are they in whom

> 'Persuasion and belief
> Have ripened into faith; and faith becom
> A passionate intuition.'

XXXI

HOPEFUL

'We are saved by hope.'—*Paul.*

UP till the time when Christian and Faithful passed through Vanity Fair on their way to the Celestial City, Hopeful was one of the most light-minded men in all that light-minded town. By his birth, and both on his father's and his mother's side, Hopeful was, to begin with, a youth of an unusually shallow and silly mind. In the jargon of our day he was a man of a peculiarly optimistic temperament. No one ever blamed him for being too subjective and introspective. It took many sharp trials and many bitter disappointments to take the inborn frivolity and superficiality out of this young man's heart. He was far on in his life, he was far on even in his religious life, before you would have ever thought of calling him a serious-minded man. Hopeful had been born and brought up to early manhood in the town of Vanity, and he knew nothing better and desired nothing better than to lay out his whole life and to rest all his hopes on the things of the fair; on such things, that is, as houses, lands, places, honours, preferments, titles, pleasures, and delights of all sorts. And that vain and empty life went on with him, till, as he

told his companion afterwards, it had all ended with him in revelling, and drinking, and uncleanness, and Sabbath-breaking, and all such things as destroyed his soul. But in Hopeful's happy case also the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church Hopeful, as he was afterwards called, had suffered so many bitter disappointments and shipwrecks of expectation from the things of the fair, that is to say, from the houses, the places, the preferments, the pleasures and what not, of the fair, that even his heart was ripe for something better than any of those things, when, as God would have it, Christian and Faithful came to the town. Hopeful was still hanging about the booths of the fair; he was just fingering his last sixpence over a commodity that he knew quite well would be like gall in his belly as soon as he had bought it; when, —what is that hubbub that rolls down the street? Hopeful was always the first to see and to hear every new thing that came to the town, and thus it was that he was soon in the thick of the tumult that rose around Christian and Faithful. Had those two pilgrims come to the town at any former time, Hopeful would have been among the foremost to mock at and smite the two men; but, to-day, Hopeful's heart is so empty, and his purse also, that he is already won to their side by the loving looks and the wise and sweet words of the two ill-used men. Some of the men of the town said that the two pilgrims were outlandish and bedlamite men, but Hopeful took courage to reprove some of the foremost of the mob. Till, at last, when Faithful was at the stake, it was all that his

companions could do to keep back Hopeful from leaping up on the burning pile and embracing the expiring man. And then, when He who overrules all things so brought it about that Christian escaped out of their hands, who should come forth and join him at the upward gate of the city but just Hopeful, who not only joined himself to the lonely pilgrim, but told him also that there were many more of the men of the city who would take their time and follow after. And thus, adds his biographer, when one died to make his testimony to the truth, another rose up out of his ashes to be a companion to Christian.

When Madame Krudener was getting her foot measured by a pietist shoemaker, she was so struck with the repose and the sweetness and the heavenly joy of the poor man's look and manner that she could not help but ask him what had happened to him that he had such a look on his countenance and such a light in his eye. She was miserable, though she had all that heart could wish. She had all that made her one of the most envied women in Europe; she had birth, talents, riches, rank, and the friendship of princes and princesses, and yet she was of all women the most miserable. And here was a poor chance shoemaker whose whole heart was running over with a joy such that all her wealth could not purchase to her heart one single drop of it. The simple soul soon told her his secret; it was no secret: it was just Jesus Christ who had done it all. And thus her poor shoemaker's happy face was the means of this great lady's conversion. And, in like manner, it was the beholding of

Christian and Faithful in their words and in their behaviour at the fair that decided Hopeful to join himself to Christian and henceforth to be his companion.

What were the things, asked Christian of his young companion, that first led you to leave off the vanities of the fair and to think to be a pilgrim? Many things, replied Hopeful. Sometimes if I did but meet a good man in the street. Or if mine head began unaccountably, or mine heart, to ache. Or if some one of my companions became suddenly sick. Or if I heard the bell toll that some one was dead. But, especially, when I thought of myself that I must quickly come to judgment. And then it is told in the best style of the book how peace and rest and the beginning of true satisfaction came to poor Hopeful's heart at last. But you must promise me to read the passage for yourselves before you sleep to-night; and to read it again and again till, like Hopeful's, your heart also is full of joy, and your eyes full of tears, and your affections running over with love to the name and to the people and to all the ways of Jesus Christ.

And then, it is very encouraging and reassuring to us to see how Hopeful's true conversion so deepened and sobered and strengthened his whole character. He remained to the end in his mental constitution and whole temperament, as we say, the same man he had always been; but, while remaining the same man, at the same time a most wonderful change gradually began to come over him, till, by slow but sure degrees, he became the Hopeful we know and look to and lean upon. To use his own autobiographic words about himself, it

was 'by hearing and considering of things that are Divine' that his natural levity was so completely whipped out of his soul till he was made at last an indispensable companion to Christian, strong-minded and serious-minded man as he was. 'Conversion to God,' says William Law, 'is often very sudden and instantaneous, unexpectedly raised from variety of occasions. Thus, one by seeing only a withered tree, another by reading the lives and deaths of the antediluvian fathers, one by hearing of heaven, another of hell, one by reading of the love or wrath of God, another of the sufferings of Christ, may find himself, as it were, melted into penitence all of a sudden. It may be granted also that the greatest sinner may in a moment be converted to God, and may feel himself wounded in such a degree as perhaps those never were who have been turning to God all their lives. But, then, it is to be observed that this suddenness of change or flash of conviction is by no means of the essence of true conversion. This stroke of conversion is not to be considered as signifying our high state of a new birth in Christ, or a proof that we are on a sudden made new creatures, but that we are thus suddenly called upon and stirred up to look after a newness of nature. The renewal of our first birth and state is something entirely distinct from our first sudden conversion and call to repentance. That is not a thing done in an instant, but is a certain process, a gradual release from our captivity and disorder, consisting of several stages and degrees, both of life and death, which the soul must go through before it can have thoroughly put off the old man. It is

well worth observing that our Saviour's greatest trials were near the end of His life. This might sufficiently show us that our first awakenings have carried us but a little way; that we should not then begin to be self-assured of our own salvation, but should remember that we stand at a great distance from, and are in great ignorance of, our severest trials.' Such was the way that Christian in his experience and in his wisdom talked to his young companion till his outward trials and the consequent discoveries he made of his own weakness and corruption made even Hopeful himself a sober-minded and a thoughtful man. 'Where pain ends, gain ends too.'

Then, again, no one can read Hopeful's remarkable history without discovering this about him, that he showed best in adversity and distress, just as he showed worst in deliverance and prosperity. It is a fine lesson in Christian hope to descend into Giant Despair's dungeon and hear the older pilgrim groaning and the younger pilgrim consoling him, and, again, to stand on the bank of the last river and hear Hopeful holding up Christian's drowning head. 'Be of good cheer, my brother, for I feel the bottom, and it is good!' Bless Hopeful for that, all you whose deathbeds are still before you. For never was more true and fit word spoken for a dying hour than that. Read, till you have it by heart and in the dark, Hopeful's whole history, but especially his triumphant end. And have some one bespoken beforehand to read Hopeful in the River to you when you have in a great measure lost your senses, and when a great horror has taken hold of

your mind. I sink in deep waters,' cried Christian, as his sins came to his mind, even the sins which he had committed both since and before he came to be a pilgrim. 'But I see the gate,' said Hopeful, 'and men standing at it ready to receive us.' 'Read to me where I first cast my anchor,' said John Knox to his weeping wife.

The Enchanted Ground, on the other hand, threatened to throw Hopeful back again into his former light-minded state. And there is no saying what shipwreck he might have made there had the older man not been with him to steady and reprove and instruct him. As it was, a touch now and then of his old vain temper returned to him till it took all his companion's watchfulness and wariness to carry them both out of that second Vanity Fair. 'I acknowledge myself in a fault,' said Hopeful to Christian, 'and had I been here alone I had run in danger of death. Hitherto, thy company hath been my mercy, and thou shalt have a good reward for all thy labour.'

Now, my brethren, in my opinion we owe a great debt of gratitude to John Bunyan for the large and the displayed place he has given to Hopeful in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. The fulness and balance and proportion of the *Pilgrim's Progress* are features of that wonderful book far too much overlooked. So far as my reading goes I do not know any other author who has at all done the justice to the saving grace of hope that John Bunyan has done both in his doctrinal and in his allegorical works. Bunyan stands alone and supreme not only for the insight and the power with which he has constructed the

character and the career of Hopeful, but even for having given him the space at all adequate to his merits and his services. In those eighty-seven so suggestive pages that form the index to Dr. Thomas Goodwin's works I find some hundred and twenty-four references to 'faith,' while there are only two references to 'hope.' And that same oversight and neglect runs through all our religious literature, and I suppose, as a consequence, through all our preaching too. Now that is not the treatment the Bible gives to this so essential Christian grace, as any one may see at a glance who takes the trouble to turn up his Cruden. Hope has a great place alongside of faith and love in the Holy Scriptures, and it has a correspondingly large and eloquent place in Bunyan. Now, that being so, why is it that this so great and so blessed grace has so fallen out of our sermons and out of our hearts? May God grant that our reading of Hopeful's autobiography and his subsequent history to-night may do something to restore the blessed grace of hope to its proper place both in our pulpit and in all our hearts.

To kindle then, to quicken, and to anchor your hope, my brethren, may I have God's help to speak for a little longer to your hearts concerning this neglected grace! For, what is hope? Hope is a passion of the soul, wise or foolish, to be ashamed of or to be proud of, just according to the thing hoped for, and just according to the grounds of the hope. Hope is made up of these two ingredients—desire and expectation. What we greatly desire we take no rest till we find good grounds on which to build up our expectations of it; and when we have found

good grounds for our expectations, then a glad hope takes possession of our hearts. Now, to begin with, how is it with your desires? You are afraid to say much about your expectations and your hopes. Well; let us come to your hearts' desires.—Men of God, I will enter into your hearts and I will tell you your hearts' desires better than you know them yourselves; for the heart is deceitful above all things. The time was, when, like this young pilgrim before he became a pilgrim, your desires were all set on houses, and lands, and places, and honours, and preferments, and wives, and children, and silver, and gold, and what not. These things at one time were the utmost limit of your desires. But that has all been changed. For now you have begun to desire a better city, that is, an heavenly. What is your chief desire for this New Year?[1] Is it not a new heart? Is it not a clean heart? Is it not a holy heart? Is it not that the Holy Ghost would write the golden rule on the tables of your heart? Does not God know that it is the deepest desire of your heart to be able to love your neighbour as yourself? To be able to rejoice with him in his joy as well as to weep with him in his sorrow? What would you not give never again to feel envy in your heart at your brother, or straitness and pining at his prosperity? One thing do I desire, said the Psalmist, that mine ear may be nailed to the doorpost of my God: that I may always be His servant, and may never wander from His service. Now, that is your desire too. I am sure it is. You would not say it

[1] January 1st, 1893.

of yourself, but I defy you to deny it when it is said about you. Well, then, such things being found among your desires, what grounds have you for expecting the fulfilment of such desires? What grounds? The best of grounds and every ground. For you have the sure ground of God's word. And you have more than His word: you have His very nature, and the very nature of things. For shall God create such desires in any man's heart only to starve and torture that man? Impossible! It were blasphemy to suspect it. No. Where God has made any man to be so far a partaker of the Divine nature as to change all that man's deepest desires, and to turn them from vanity to wisdom, from earth to heaven, and from the creature to the Creator, doubt not, wherever He has begun such a work, that He will hasten to finish it. Yes; lift up your heavy hearts, all ye who desire such things, for God hath sent His Son to say to you, Blessed are ye that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for ye shall be filled. Only, keep desiring. Desire every day with a stronger and a more inconsolable desire. Desire, and ground your desire on God's word, and then heave your hope like an anchor within the veil whither the Forerunner is for you entered. May I so hope? you say. May I venture to hope? Yes; not only may you hope, but you must hope. You are commanded to hope. It is as much your bounden duty to hope always, and to hope for the greatest and best things, as it is to repent of your sins, to love God and your neighbour, to keep yourself pure, and to set a watch on the door of your lips. You have been destroyed, I confess

and lament it, for lack of knowledge about the nature, the grounds, and the duty of hope. But make up now for past neglect. Hope steadfastly, hope constantly, hope boldly; hope for the best things, the greatest things, the most divine and the most blessed things. If you forget to-night all else you have heard to-day, I implore you not any longer to forget and neglect this, that hope is your immediate, constant, imperative duty. No sin, no depth of corruption in your heart, no assault on your heart from your conscience, can justify you in ceasing to hope. Even when trouble 'comes tumbling over the neck of all your reformations' as it came tumbling on Hopeful, let that only drive you the more deeply down into the true grounds of hope; even against hope rejoice in hope. Remember the Psalmist in the hundred-and-thirtieth Psalm,—down in the deeps, if ever a fallen sinner was. Yet hear him when you cannot see him saying: I hope in Thy word! And—for it is worthy to stand beside even that splendid psalm,—I beseech you to read and lay to heart what Hopeful says about himself in his conversion despair.

And then, as if to justify that hope, there always come with it such sanctifying influences and such sure results. The hope that you are one day to awaken in the Divine likeness will make you lie down on your bed every night in self-examination, repentance, prayer, and praise. The hope that your eyes are one day to see Christ as He is will make you purify yourself as nothing else will. The hope that you are to walk with Christ in white will make you keep your garments clean; it will make you wash

them many times every day in the blood of the Lamb. The hope that you are to cast your crown at His feet will make you watch that no man takes your crown from you. The hope that you are to drink wine with Him in His Father's kingdom will reconcile you meanwhile to water, lest with your wine you stumble any of His little ones. The hope of hearing Him say, Well done !—how that will make you labour and endure and not faint ! And the hope that you shall one day enter in through the gates into the city, and have a right to the tree of life,—how scrupulous that will make you to keep all His commandments ! And this is one of His commandments, that you gird up the loins of your mind, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

XXXII

TEMPORARY

'They are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.'—*Our Lord.*

'WELL, then, did you not know about ten years ago one Temporary in your parts who was a forward man in religion? Know him! replied the other. Yes. For my house not being above three miles from his house he would ofttimes come to me, and that with many tears. Truly I pitied the man, and was not altogether without hope of him; but one may see that it is not every one who cries Lord, Lord. And now, since we are talking about him, let us a little inquire into the reason of the sudden backsliding of him and such others. It may be very profitable, said Christian, but do you begin. Well, then, there are in my judgment several reasons for it.' And then, with the older man's entire approval, Hopeful sets forth several reasons, taken from his own observation of backsliders, why so many men's religion is such a temporary thing; why so many run well for a time, and then stand still, and then turn back.

1. The fear of man bringeth a snare, said Hope-

ful, moralising over his old acquaintance Temporary. And how true that observation is every evangelical minister knows to his deep disappointment. A young man comes to his minister at some time of distress in his life, or at some time of revival of religion in the community, or at an ordinary communion season, and gives every sign that he is early and fairly embarked on an honourable Christian life. He takes his place in the Church of Christ, and he puts out his hand to her work, till we begin to look forward with boastfulness to a life of great stability and great attainment for that man. Our Lord, as we see from so many of His parables, must have had many such cases among His first followers. Our Lord might be speaking prophetically, as well as out of His own experience, so well do His regretful and lamenting words fit into so many of our own cases to-day. For, look at that young business man. He has been born and brought up in the Church of Christ. He has gladdened more hearts than he knows by the noble promise of his early days. Many admiring and loving eyes have been turned on him as he took so hopefully the upward way. But a sifting-time soon comes. A time of temptation comes. A time comes when sides must be taken in some moral, religious, ecclesiastical controversy. This young man is at that moment a candidate for a post that will bring distinction, wealth, and social influence to him who holds it. And the candidate we are so much interested in is admittedly a man of such outstanding talents that he would at once get the post were it not

that the holder of that post must not have his name so much associated with such and such a church, such and such political and religious opinions, and such and such public men. He is told that. Indeed, he is not so dull as to need to be told that. He has seen that all along. And at first it is a dreadful wrench to him. He feels how far he is falling from his high ideals in life; and, at first, and for a long time, it is a dreadful humiliation to him. But, then, there are splendid compensations. And, better than that, there are some good, and indeed compelling, reasons that begin to rise up in our minds when we need them and begin to look for them, till what at first seemed so mean and so contemptible, and so ungrateful, and so dishonourable, as well as so spiritually perilous, comes to be faced and gone through with positively on a ground of high principle, and, indeed, of stern moral necessity. So deceitful is the human heart that you could not believe what compelling reasons such a mean-spirited man will face you with as to why he should leave all the ways he once so delighted in for a piece of bread, and for the smile of the open enemies of his church, and his faith, not to say his Saviour. You will meet with several such men any afternoon coming home from their business. Sometimes they have still some honest shame on their faces when they meet you; but still oftener they pass you with a sullen hatred and a fierce defiance. This is he who heard the word, and anon with joy received it. Yet had he not root in himself, but dured for a while; for when tribulation or

persecution arose because of the word by and by he was offended. They went out from us, says John, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

2. Guilt, again, Hopeful went on, and to meditate terror, are so grievous to most men, that they rather choose such ways as will but harden their hearts still more and more. You all know what it is to meditate terror? 'Thine heart shall meditate terror,' says the prophet, 'when thou sayest to thyself, who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' The fifty-first Psalm is perhaps the best meditation both of guilt and of terror that we have in the whole Bible. But there are many other psalms and passages of psalms only second to the fifty-first Psalm, such as the twenty-second, the thirty-eighth, the sixty-ninth, and the hundred-and-thirtieth. Our Lord Himself also was meditating terror in the garden of Gethsemane, and Paul both guilt and terror when he imagined himself both an apostate preacher and a castaway soul. And John's meditations of terror in the Revelation rose into those magnificent pictures of the Last Judgment with which he has to all time covered the walls of the Seven Churches. In his own *Grace Abounding* there are meditations of terror quite worthy to stand beside the most terrible things of that kind th[illegible] ever were written, as also in many others of ou[illegible]thor's dramatical and homiletical books. I read to you the other Sabbath

morning a meditation of terror that was found among Bishop Andrewes' private papers after his death. You will not all have forgotten that meditation, but I will read it to you to-night again. 'How fearful,' says Andrewes, in his terror, 'will Thy judgment be, O Lord, when the thrones are set, and the angels stand around, and men are brought in, and the books are opened, and all our works are inquired into, and all our thoughts are examined, and all the hidden things of darkness! What, O God, shall Thy judgment that day be upon me? Who shall quench my flame, who shall lighten my darkness, if Thou pity me not? Lord, as Thou art loving, give me tears, give me floods of tears, and give me all that this day, before it be too late. For then will be the incorruptible Judge, the horrible judgment-seat, the answer without excuse, the inevitable charge, the shameful punishment, the endless Gehenna, the pitiless angels, the yawning hell, the roaring stream of fire, the unquenchable flame, the dark prison, the rayless darkness, the bed of live coals, the unwearied worm, the indissoluble chains, the bottomless chaos, the impassable wall, the inconsolable cry. And none to stand by me; none to plead for me; none to snatch me out.' Now, no Temporary ever possessed anything like that in his own handwriting among his private papers. A meditation like that, written out with his own hand, and hidden away under lock and key, will secure any man from it, even if he had been appointed to backsliding and reprobation. Bishop Andrewes, as any one will see who reads his

Private Devotions, was the chief of sinners; but his discovered and deciphered papers will all speak for him when they are spread out before the great white throne, 'glorious in their deformity, being slubbered,' as his editors say, 'with his pious hands, and watered with his penitential tears.'

Thomas Shepard's *Ten Virgins* is the most terrible book upon Temporaries that ever was written. Temporaries never once saw their true vileness, he keeps on saying. Temporaries are, no doubt, wounded for sin sometimes, but never in the right place nor to the right depth. And again, sin, and especially heart-sin, is never really bitter to Temporaries. In an 'exhortation to all new beginners, and so to all others,' 'Be sure,' Shepard says, 'your wound for sin at first is deep enough. For all the error in a man's faith and sanctification springs from his first error in his humiliation. If a man's humiliation be false, or even weak or little, then his faith and his hold of Christ are weak and little, and his sanctification counterfeit. But if a man's wound be right, and his humiliation deep enough, that man's faith will be right and his sanctification will be glorious. The esteem of Christ is always little where sin lies light.' And Hopeful himself says a thing at this point that is quite worthy of Shepard himself, such is its depth and insight. He speaks of the righteous actually *loving* the sight of their misery. He does not explain what he means by that startling language because he is talking all the time, as he knows quite well, to one who understood all that before he was born. Nor will I attempt to explain or to vindicate what he says.

Those of you who love the sight of your own misery as sinners will understand what Hopeful says without any explanation; while those who do not understand him would only be the more stumbled by any explanation of him. The love of the sight of their misery, and the unearthly sweetness of their sorrow for sin, are only another two of those provoking paradoxes of which the lives of God's true saints are full—paradoxes and impossibilities and incoherencies that make the literature of experimental religion to be positively hateful and unbearable to Temporary and to all his self-seeking and apostate kindred.

3. But even where the consciences of such men are occasionally awakened, proceeds Hopeful, in his so searching discovery of Temporaries, yet their minds are not changed. There you are pretty near the business, replied his fellow; for the bottom of all is, for want of a change of their mind and will. Now, one would have been afraid and ashamed for one moment to suspect that Temporary's mind was not completely changed, so 'forward' was he at first in his religion. But, no: forward before all his neighbours as Temporary was, to begin with, yet all the time his mind was not really changed. His forwardness did not properly spring out of his true mind at all, but only out of his momentarily awakened conscience and his momentarily excited heart. A sinner with a truly changed mind is never forward. His mind is so changed that forwardness in anything is utterly alien to it, and especially all forwardness in the profession of religion. The change that had taken place in Temporary, what-

ever was the seat of it, only led him to bully men like Christian and Hopeful, who would not go fast enough for him. 'Come,' said Pliable, in the beginning of the book, 'come on and let us mend our pace.' 'I cannot go so fast as I would,' humbly replied Christian, 'because of this burden on my back.' It is a common observation among mountaineers that he who takes the hill at the greatest spurt is the last climber to come to the top, and that many who so ostentatiously make spurts at the bottom of the hill never come within sight of the top at all. And this is one of the constant dangers that wait on all revivals, religious retreats, conferences, and even communion seasons. Our hot fits, the hotter they are, are only the more likely, unless we take the greatest care, to cast us down into all the more deadly a chill. It is this danger that our Lord points out so plainly in His parable of apostasy. The same is he, says our Lord, that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while. In Hopeful's words, his mind and will were never changed with all his joy, only his passing moods and his momentary emotions.

Multitudes of men who are as forward at first as Pliable and Temporary were turn out at last to have no root in themselves; but here and there you will discover a man who is all root together. There are some men whose whole mind and heart and will, whose whole inward man, has gone to root. All the strength and all the fatness of their religious life retreat into its root. They have no leaves at all, and they have too little fruit as yet; but you

should see their roots. Only, no eye but the eye of God can see sorrow for sin—secret and sore humiliation on account of secret sin—the incessant agony that goes on within between the flesh and the spirit, between sin and grace, between very hell and heaven itself. To know your own evil hearts, my brethren, say to you on that subject what any Temporary will, is the very root of the whole matter to you. Whatever Dr. Newman's mistakes as to outward churches may have been, he was a master of the human heart, the most difficult of all matters to master. Listen, then, to what he says on the matter now in hand. 'Now, unless we have some just idea of our hearts and of sin, we can have no right idea of a Moral Governor, a Saviour, or a Sanctifier; that is, in professing to believe in them we shall be using words without attaching any distinct meaning to them. Thus self-knowledge is at the root of all real religious knowledge; and it is vain,—it is worse than vain,—it is a deceit and a mischief, to think to understand the Christian doctrines as a matter of course, merely by being taught by books, or by attending sermons, or by any outward means, however excellent, taken by themselves. For it is in proportion as we search our hearts and understand our own nature that we understand what is meant by an Infinite Governor and Judge; it is in proportion as we comprehend the nature of disobedience and our actual sinfulness that we feel what is the blessing of the removal of sin, redemption, pardon, sanctification, which otherwise are mere words. God speaks to us primarily in our hearts. Self-knowledge is the key to the precepts and doctrines

of Scripture. The very utmost that any outward notices of religion can do is to startle us and make us turn inward and search our hearts; and then, when we have experienced what it is to read ourselves, we shall profit by the doctrine of the Church and the Bible.' My brethren, the temper in which you receive that passage, and receive it from its author, may be safely taken by you as a sure presage whether you are to turn out a Temporary and a Castaway or no.

Now, to conclude with a word of admission, and, bound up with it, a word of encouragement. After all that has been said, I fully admit that we are all Temporaries to begin with. We all cool down from our first heat in religion We all halt from our first spurt. We all turn back from faith and from duty and from privilege through our fear of men, or through our corrupt love of ourselves, or through our coarse-minded love of this present world. Only, those who are appointed to perseverance, and through that to eternal life, always kindle again; they are kindled again, and they love the return of their lost warmth. They recover themselves and address themselves again and again to the race that is still set before them. They prove themselves not to be of those who draw back unto perdition, but of those that believe to the saving of the soul. Now, if you have only too good ground to suspect that you are but a temporary believer, what are you to do to make your sure escape out of that perilous state? What, but to keep on believing? You must cry constantly, Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief! When at any time you are under any

temptation or corruption, and you feel that your faith and your love are letting slip their hold of Christ and of eternal life, then knot your weak heart all the faster to the throne of grace, to the cross of Christ, and to the gate of heaven. Give up all your mind and heart, and all that is within you, to the one thing needful. Labour night and day in your own heart at believing on Christ, at loving your neighbour, and at discovering, denying, and crucifying yourself. It will all pay you in the long run. For if you do all these things, and persistently do them, then, though you are at this moment all but dead to all divine things, and all but a reprobate, it will be found at last that all the time your name was written among the elect in heaven.

The perseverance of the saints, the 'five points' notwithstanding, is not a foregone conclusion. The final perseverance of the ripest and surest saint is all made up of ever-new beginnings in repentance, in faith, in love, and in obedience. Begin, then, every new day to repent anew, to return anew, to believe and to love anew. And if all your New-Year repentances and returnings and reformations are all already proved to be but temporary—even if they lie all around you already a bitter mockery of all your professions—still, begin again. Begin to-night, and begin again to-morrow morning. Spend all the remainder of your days on earth beginning. And, ere ever you are aware, the final perseverance of another predestinated saint will be found accomplished in you.

XXXIII

SECRET

'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.'—*David.*

TRULY religious life is always a secret life: it is a life hid, as Paul has it, with Christ in God. The secret of the Lord, says the Psalmist, is with them that fear Him. And thus it is that when men begin to fear God, both their hearts and their lives are henceforth full of all kinds of secrets that are known to themselves and to God only. It was when Christiana's fearful thoughts began to work in her mind about her husband whom she had lost—it was when all her unkind, unnatural, and ungodly carriages to her dear friend came into her mind in swarms, clogged her conscience, and loaded her with guilt—it was then that Secret knocked at her door. 'Next morning,' so her opening history runs, 'when she was up, and had prayed to God, and talked with her children awhile, one knocked hard at the door to whom she spake out, saying, If thou comest in God's name, come in. So he who was at the door said, Amen, and opened the door, and saluted her with, Peace be to this house. The which when he had done, he said, Christiana, knowest thou

wherefore I am come? Then she blushed and trembled, also her heart began to wax warm with desires to know whence he came, and what was his errand to her. So he said unto her, My name is Secret, I dwell with those that are high. It is talked of where I dwell as if thou hadst a desire to go thither; also, there is a report that thou art aware now of the evil thou formerly didst to thy husband in hardening of thy heart against his way, and in keeping of thy babes in their ignorance. Christiana, the Merciful One has sent me to tell thee that He is a God ready to forgive, and that He taketh delight to multiply to pardon offences. He would also have thee know that He inviteth thee to come into His presence, even to His table, and that He will there feed thee with the fat of His house, and with the heritage of Jacob thy father. Christiana at all this was greatly abashed in herself, and she bowed her head to the ground, while her visitor proceeded and said, Christiana, here is a letter for thee which I have brought from thy husband's King. So she took it and opened it, and, as she opened it, it smelt after the manner of the best perfume; also it was written in lettering of gold. The contents of the letter was to this effect, that the King would have her do as did Christian her husband, for that was the way to come to the city and to dwell in His presence with joy for ever. At this the good woman was completely overcome. So she said to her visitor, Sir, will you carry me and my children with you that we may go and worship this King? Then said the heavenly visitor, Christiana,

the bitter is before the sweet. Thou must through troubles, as did he that went before thee, enter this celestial city.' And so on.

1. Now, to begin with, you will have noticed the way in which Christiana was prepared for the entrance of Secret into her house. She was a widow. She sat alone in that loneliness which only widows know and understand. More than lonely, she was very miserable. 'Mark this,' says the author on the margin, 'you that are churls to your godly relations.' For this widow felt sure that her husband had been taken from her because of her cruel behaviour to him. Her past unnatural carriages toward her husband now rent the very caul of her heart in sunder. And, again and again, about that same time strange dreams would sometimes visit her. Dreams such as this. She would see her husband in a place of bliss with a harp in his hand, standing and playing upon it before One that sat on a throne with a rainbow round His head. She saw also as if he bowed his head with his face to the paved work that was under the Prince's feet, saying, I heartily thank my Lord and King for bringing me to this place. You will easily see how ready this lone woman was with all that for his entrance who knocked and said, Peace be to this house, and handed her a letter of perfume from her husband's King. Then you will have remarked also some of the things this visitor from on high said to her of the place whence he had come. He told her, to begin with, how they sometimes talked about her in his country. She thought that she was a lonely and forgotten widow, and that

no one cared what became of her. But her visitor assured her she was quite wrong in thinking that. He had often himself heard her name mentioned in conversation above; and the most hopeful reports, he told her, were circulated from door to door that she was actually all but started on the upward way. Yes, he said, and we have a place prepared for you on the strength of these reports, a place among the immortals close beside your husband. And all that, as you will not wonder, was the beginning of Christiana's secret life. After that morning she never again felt alone or forgotten. I am not alone, she would after that say, when any of her old neighbours knocked at her door. No, I am not alone, but if thou comest in God's name, come in.

2. And from that day a long succession of secret providences began to enter Christiana's life, till, as time went on, her whole life was filled full of secret providences. And not her present life only, but her discoveries of God's secret providences towards her and hers became retrospective also, till both her own parentage and birth, her husband's parentage and birth also, the day she first saw him, the day of their espousals, the day of their marriage, and the day of his death, all shone out now as so many secret and special providences of God toward her. Bishop Martensen has a fine passage on the fragmentariness of our knowledge, not only of divine providence as a whole, but even of those divine providences that fill up our own lives. And he warns us that, till we have heard the 'Prologue in Heaven,' many a riddle in our lives must of necessity remain unsolved. Christiana could not have told her in-

quiring children what a prologue was, nor an epilogue either, but many were the wise and winning discourses she held with her boys about their father now in heaven, about her happiness in having had such a father for her children, and about their happiness that the road was open before them to go to where he now is. And there are many poor widows among ourselves who are wiser than all their teachers, because they are in that school of experience into which God takes His afflicted people and opens to them His deepest secrets. They remember, with Job, when the secret of the Lord was first upon their tabernacle. Their widowed hearts are full of holy household memories. They remember the days when the candle of the Lord shone upon their head, when they washed their steps with butter, and the rock poured them out rivers of oil. And still, when, like Job also, they sit solitary among the ashes, the secret of the Lord is only the more secretly and intimately with them. John Bunyan was well fitted to be Christiana's biographer, because his own life was as full as it could hold of these same secret and special providences. One day he was walking—so he tells us—in a good man's shop, bemoaning himself of his sad and doleful state, when a mighty rushing wind came in through the window and seemed to carry words of Scripture on its wings to Bunyan's disconsolate soul. He candidly tells us that he does not know, after twenty years' reflection, what to make of that strange dispensation. That it took place, and that it left the most blessed results behind it, he is sure; but as to how God did it, by what means, by what

instruments, both the rushing wind itself and the salutation that accompanied it, he is fain to let lie till the day of judgment. And many of ourselves have had strange dispensations too that we must leave alone, and seek no other explanation of them for the present but the blessed results of them. We have had divine descents into our lives that we can never attempt to describe. Interpositions as plain to us as if we had both seen and spoken with the angel who executed them. Miraculous deliverances that throw many Old and New Testament miracles into the shade. Providential adaptations and re-adjustments also, as if all things were actually and openly and without a veil being made to work together for our good. Extrications also; nets broken, snares snapped, and such pavilions of safety and solace opened to us that we can find no psalm secret and special enough in which to utter our life-long astonishment. Importunate prayers anticipated, postponed, denied, translated, transmuted, and then answered till our cup was too full; sweet changed to bitter, and bitter changed to sweet, so wonderfully, so graciously, and so often, that words fail us, and we can only now laugh and now weep over it all. Poor Cowper knew something about it—

'God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

'Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

3. Secret scriptures also—from that enlightening day Christiana's Bible became full of them. Peter says that no prophecy is of any private interpretation; and, whatever he means by that, what he says must be true. But Christiana would have understood the apostle better if he had said the exact opposite of that,—if not about the prophecies, at least about the psalms. Leave the prophecies in this connection alone; but of the psalms it may safely be said that it is neither the literal nor the historical nor the mystical interpretation that gets at the heart of those supreme scriptures. It is the private, personal, and, indeed, secret interpretation that gets best at the deepest heart of the psalms. An old Bible came into my hands the other day—a Bible that had seen service—and it opened of its own accord at the Book of Psalms. On turning over the yellow leaves I found a date and a deep indentation opposite these words: 'Commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in Him: and He will bring it to pass.' And as I looked at the figures on the margin, and at the underscored text, I felt as if I were on the brink of an old-world secret. 'Create in me a clean heart' had a significant initial also; as had this: 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.' The whole of the hundred-and-third psalm was bracketed off from all public interpretation; while the tenth, the cardinal verse of that secret psalm, had a special seal set upon it. Judging from

its stains and scars and other accidents, the whole of the hundred-and-nineteenth psalm had been a special favourite; while the hundred-and-forty-third also was all broidered round with shorthand symbols. But the secret key of all those symbols and dates and enigmatical marks was no longer to be found; it had been carried away in the owner's own heart. But, my head being full of Christiana at the time, I felt as if I held her own old Bible in my hand as I turned over those ancient leaves.

4. Our Lord so practised secrecy Himself in His fasting, in His praying, and in His almsgiving, and He makes so much of that same secrecy in all His teaching, as almost to make the essence of all true religion to stand in its secrecy. 'When thou prayest,' says our Lord, 'shut thy door and pray in secret.' As much as to say that we are scarcely praying at all when we are praying in public. Praying in public is so difficult that new beginners, like His disciples, have to practise that so difficult art for a long time in secret. Public prayer has so many besetting sins, it is open to so many temptations, distractions, and corruptions, that it is almost impossible to preserve the real essence of prayer in public prayer. But in secret all those temptations and distractions are happily absent. We have no temptation to be too long in secret prayer, or too loud, or too eloquent. Stately old English goes for nothing in secret prayer. We never need to go to our knees in secret trembling, lest we lose the thread of our prayer, or forget that so fit and so fine expression. The longer we are the better in secret prayer. Much speaking is really a virtue in secret

prayer; much speaking and many repetitions. Also, we can put things into our secret prayers that we dare not come within a thousand miles of in the pulpit, or the prayer-meeting, or the family. We can enter into the most plain-spoken particulars about ourselves in secret. We can put our proper name upon ourselves, and upon our actions, and especially upon our thoughts when our door is shut. Then, again, we can pray for other people by name in secret; we can enter, so far as we know them, into all their circumstances in a way it is impossible to do anywhere but in the utmost secrecy. We can, in short, be ourselves in secret; and, unless it is to please or to impress men, we had better not pray at all unless we are ourselves when we are engaged in it. You can be yourself, your very worst self; nay, you must be, else you will not long pray in secret, and even if you did you would not be heard. I do not remember that very much is said in so many words in her after-history about Christiana's habits of closet-prayer. But that Secret taught her the way, and waited till she had tasted the sweetness and the strength of being a good while on her knees alone, I am safe to say; indeed, I read it between the lines in all her after-life. She was rewarded openly in a way that testifies to much secret prayer; that is to say, in the early conversion of her children, in the way they settled in life, and such like things. Pray much for those things in secret that you wish to possess openly.

5. But perhaps the best and most infallible evidence we can have of the truth of our religion in this life is in the steady increase of our secret sinfulness.

Christiana had no trouble with her own wicked heart so long as she was a woman of a wicked life. But directly she became a new creature, her heart began to swarm, such is her own expression, with sinful memories, sinful thoughts, and sinful feelings; till she had need of some one ever near her, like Greatheart, constantly to assure her that those cruel and deadly swarms, instead of being a bad sign of her salvation, were the very best signs possible of her good estate. Humility is the foundation of all our graces, and there is no humility so deep and so ever-deepening as that evangelical humility which in its turn rises out of and rests upon secret sinfulness. Not upon acts of secret sin. Do not mistake me. Acts of secret sin harden the heart and debauch the conscience. But I speak of that secret, original, unexplored, and inexpugnable sinfulness out of which all a sinner's actual sins, both open sins and secret, spring; and out of which a like life of open and actual sins would spring in God's very best saints, if only both He and they did not watch night and day against them. Sensibility to sin, or rather to sinfulness, is far and away the best evidence of sanctification that is possible to us in this life. It is this keen and bitter sensibility that secures, amid all oppositions and obstructions, the true saint's onward and upward progress. Were it not for the misery of their own hearts, God's best saints would fall asleep and go back like other men. A sinful heart is the misery of all miseries. It is the deepest and darkest of all dungeons. It is the most painful and the most loathsome of all diseases. And the secrecy of it all adds to the bitterness and

the gall of it all. We may know that other men's hearts are as sinful as our own, but we do not feel their sinfulness. We cannot sensibly feel humiliation, bondage, sickness, and self-loathing on account of another man's envy, or ill-will, or resentment, or cruelty, or falsehood, or impurity. All these things must be our own before we can enter into the pain and the shame of them; but, when we do, then we taste what death and hell are indeed. As I write these feeble words about it, a devil's shaft of envy that was shot all against my will into my heart this morning, still, after a whole day, rankles and festers there. I have been on my knees with it again and again; I have stood and looked into an open grave to-day; but there it is sucking at my heart's blood still, like a leech of hell. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thou me from secret faults. Create in me a clean heart, O God. O wretched man that I am! 'Let a man,' says William Law when he is enforcing humility, 'but consider that if the world knew all that of him which he knows of himself: if they saw what vanity and what passions govern his inside, and what secret tempers sully and corrupt his best actions, he would have no more pretence to be honoured and admired for his goodness and wisdom than a rotten and distempered body to be loved and admired for its beauty and comeliness. This is so true, and so known to the hearts of almost all people, that nothing would appear more dreadful to them than to have their hearts fully discovered to the eyes of all beholders. And, perhaps, there are very few people in the world who would not rather choose to die than to have all their secret

follies, the errors of their judgments, the vanity of their minds, the falseness of their pretences, the frequency of their vain and disorderly passions, their uneasinesses, hatreds, envies, and vexations made known to all the world.' Where did William Law get that terrible passage? Where could he get it but in the secret heart of the miserable author of the *Serious Call*?

6. The half cannot be told of the guilt and the corruption, the pain and the shame and the manifold misery of secret sin; but all that will be told, believed, and understood by all men long before the full magnificence of their sanctification, and the superb transcendence of their blessedness, will even begin to be described to God's secret saints. For, all that sleepless, cruel, and soul-killing pain, and all that shameful and humbling corruption,—all that means, all that is, so much holiness, so much heaven, working itself out in the soul. All that is so much immortal life, spotless beauty, and incorruptible joy already begun in the soul. Every such pang in a holy heart is a death-pang of another sin and a birth-pang of another grace. Brotherly love is at last being born never to die in that heart where envy and malice and resentment and revenge are causing inward agony. And humility and meekness and the whole mind of Christ are there where pride and anger and ill-will are felt to be very hell itself. And holiness, even as God is holy, will soon be there for ever where the sinfulness of sin is a sinner's acutest sorrow. 'As for me,' said one whose sin was ever before him, 'I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I wake with Thy likeness.'

XXXIV

MRS. TIMOROUS

'But the fearful [literally, the timid and the cowardly] shall have their part in the second death.'—*Revelation* xxi.

NO sooner had Secret bidden Christiana farewell than she began with all her might to make ready for her great journey. 'Come, my children, let us pack up and begone to the gate that leads to the Celestial City, that we may see your father and be with him, and with his companions, in peace, according to the laws of that land.' And then: 'Come in, if you come in God's name!' Christiana called out, as two of her neighbours knocked at her door. 'Having little to do at home this morning,' said the elder of the two women, 'I have come across to kill a little time with you. I spent last night with Mrs. Light-mind, and I have some good news for you this morning.' 'I am just preparing for a journey this morning,' said Christiana, packing up all the time, 'and I have not so much as one moment to spare.' You know yourselves what Christiana's nervousness and almost impatience were. You know how it upsets your good temper and all your civility when you are packing up for a long absence from home, and some one comes in, and will talk, and will not see how behindhand and

how busy you are. 'For what journey, I pray you?' asked Mrs. Timorous, for that was her visitor's name. 'Even to go after my good husband,' the busy woman said, and with that she fell a-weeping. But you must read the whole account of that eventful morning in Christiana's memoirs for yourselves till you have it, as Secret said, by root-of-heart. On the understanding that you are not total strangers to that so excellently-written passage I shall now venture a few observations upon it.

1. Well, to begin with, Mrs. Timorous was not a bad woman, as women went in that town and in that day. Her companions,—her gossips, as she would have called them,—were far worse women than she was; and, had it not been for her family infirmity, had it not been for that timid, hesitating, lukewarm, and half-and-half habit of mind which she had inherited from her father, there is no saying what part she might have played in the famous expedition of Christiana and Mercy and the boys. Her father had been a pilgrim himself at one time; but he had now for a long time been known in the town as a turncoat and a temporary, and all his children had unhappily taken after their father in that. Had her father held on as he at one time had begun—had he held on in the face of all fear and all danger as Christiana's noble husband had done — to a certainty his daughter would have started that morning with Christiana and her company, and would have been, if a timid, easily scared, and troublesome pilgrim, yet as true a pilgrim, and made as welcome at last, as, say, Miss

Much-afraid, Mr. Fearing, and Mr. Ready-to-halt were made. But her father's superficiality and shakiness, and at bottom his warm love of this world and his lukewarm love of the world to come, had unfortunately all descended to his daughter, till we find her actually reviling Christiana on that decisive morning, and returning to her dish of tea and tittle-tattle with Mrs. Bats-eyes, Mrs. Inconsiderate, Mrs. Light-mind, and Mrs. Know-nothing.

2. The thing that positively terrified Mrs. Timorous at the very thought of setting out with Christiana that morning was that intolerable way in which Christiana had begun to go back upon her past life as a wife and a mother. Christiana could not hide her deep distress, and, indeed, she did not much try. Such were the swarms of painful memories that her husband's late death, the visit of Secret, and one thing and another had let loose upon Christiana's mind, that she could take pleasure in nothing but in how she was to escape away from her past life, and how she could in any way mend it and make up for it where she could not escape from it. 'You may judge yourself,' said Mrs. Timorous to Mrs. Light-mind, 'whether I was likely to find much entertainment with a woman like that!' For, Mrs. Timorous too, you must know, had a past life of her own; and it was that past life of hers all brought back by Christiana's words that morning that made Mrs. Timorous so revile her old friend and return to the society we so soon see her with. Now, is not this the case, that we all have swarms of evil memories that we dare not face? There is no single relationship in life that

we can boldly look back upon and fully face. As son or as daughter, as brother or as sister, as friend or as lover, as husband or as wife, as minister or as member, as master or as servant—what swarms of hornet-memories darken our hearts as we so look back! Let any grown-up man, with some imagination, tenderness of heart, and integrity of conscience, go back step by step, taking some time to it,—at a new year, say, or a birthday, or on some such suitable occasion: let him go over his past life back to his youth and childhood—and what an intolerable burden will be laid on his heart before he is done! What a panorama of scarlet pictures will pass before his inward eye! What a forest of accusing fingers will be pointed at him! What hissing curses will be spat at him both by the lips of the living and the dead! What untold pains he will see that he has caused to the innocent and the helpless! What desolating disappointments, what shipwrecks of hope to this man and to that woman! What a stone of stumbling he has been to many who on that stone have been for ever broken and lost! What a rock of offence even his mere innocent existence, all unknown to himself till afterwards, has been! Swarms, said Christiana. Swarms of hornets armed, said Samson. And many of us understand what that bitter word means better than any commentator on Bunyan or on Milton can tell us. One of the holiest men the Church of England ever produced, and one of her best devotional writers, used to shut his door on the night of every first day of the week, and on his knees spread out a prayer which always contained this passage:

'I worship Thee, O God, on my face. I smite my breast and say with the publican, God be merciful to me a sinner; the chief of sinners; a sinner far above the publican. Despise me not—an unclean worm, a dead dog, a putrid corpse. Despise me not, despise me not, O Lord. But look upon me with those eyes with which Thou didst look upon Magdalene at the feast, Peter in the hall, and the thief on the cross. O that mine eyes were a fountain of tears that I might weep night and day before Thee! I despise and bruise myself that my penitence is not deeper, is not fuller. Help Thou mine impenitence, and more and more pierce, rend, and crush my heart. My sins are more in number than the sand. My iniquities are multiplied, and I have no relief.' Perish your Puritanism, and your prayer-books too! I hear some high-minded and indignant man saying. Perish your Celestial City and all my desire after it, before I say the like of that about myself! Brave words, my brother; brave words! But there have been men as blameless as you are, and as brave-hearted over it, who, when the scales fell off their eyes, were heard crying out ever after: O wretched man that I am! And: Have mercy on me, the chief of sinners! And so, if it so please God, will it yet be with you.

3. 'Having had little to do this morning,' said Mrs. Timorous to Mrs. Light-mind, 'I went to give Christiana a visit.' 'Law,' I read in his most impressive Life, 'by this time was well turned fifty, but he rose as early and was as soon at his desk as when he was still a new, enthusiastic, and scrupulously methodical student at Cambridge.' Summer

and winter Law rose to his devotions and his studies at five o'clock, not because he had imperative sermons to prepare, but because, in his own words, it is more reasonable to suppose a person up early because he is a Christian than because he is a labourer or a tradesman or a servant. I have a great deal of business to do, he would say. I have a hardened heart to change; I have still the whole spirit of religion to get. When Law at any time felt a temptation to relax his rule of early devotion, he again reminded himself how fast he was becoming an old man, and how far back his sanctification still was, till he flung himself out of bed and began to make himself a new heart before the servants had lighted their fires or the farmers had yoked their horses. Shame on you, he said to himself, to lie folded up in a bed when you might be pouring out your heart in prayer and in praise, and thus be preparing yourself for a place among those blessed beings who rest not day and night saying, Holy, Holy, Holy. I have little to do this morning,' said Mrs. Timorous. 'But I am preparing for a journey,' said Christiana. 'I have now a price put into my hand to get gain, and I should be a fool of the greatest size if I should have no heart to strike in with the opportunity.'

4. Another thing that completely threw out Christiana's idle visitor and made her downright angry was the way she would finger and kiss and read pieces out of the fragrant letter she held in her hand. You will remember how Christiana came by that letter she was now so fond of. 'Here,' said Secret, 'is a letter I have brought

thee from thy husband's King.' So she took it and opened it, and it smelt after the manner of the best perfume; also it was written in letters of gold. 'I advise thee,' said Secret, 'that thou put this letter in thy bosom, that thou read therein to thy children until you have all got it by root-of-heart.' 'His messenger was here,' said Christiana to Mrs. Timorous, 'and has brought me a letter which invites me to come.' And with that she plucked out the letter and read to her out of it, and said: 'What now do you say to all that?' That, again, is so true to our own life. For there is nothing that more distastes and disrelishes many people among us than just that we should name to them our favourite books, and read a passage out of them, and ask them to say what they think of such wonderful words. Samuel Rutherford's *Letters*, for instance; a book that smells to some nostrils with the same heavenly perfume as Secret's own letter did. A book, moreover, that is written in the same ink of gold. Ask at afternoon tea to-morrow, even in so-called Christian homes, when any of the ladies round the table last read, and how often they have read, *Grace Abounding*, *The Saint's Rest*, *The Religious Affections*, *Jeremy Taylor*, *Law*, *à Kempis*, *Fénelon*, or such like, and they will smile to one another and remark after you are gone on your strange taste for old-fashioned and long-winded and introspective books. 'Julia has buried her husband and married her daughters, and since that she spends her time in reading. She is always reading foolish and unedifying books. She tells you every time she sees you that she is almost at the

end of the silliest book that ever she read in her life. But the best of it is that it serves to dispose of a good deal of her spare time. She tells you all romances are sad stuff, yet she is very impatient till she can get all she can hear of. Histories of intrigue and scandal are the books that Julia thinks are always too short. The truth is, she lives upon folly and scandal and impertinence. These things are the support of her dull hours. And yet she does not see that in all this she is plainly telling you that she is in a miserable, disordered, reprobate state of mind. Now, whether you read her books or no, you perhaps think with her that it is a dull task to read only religious and especially spiritual books. But when you have the spirit of true religion, when you can think of God as your only happiness, when you are not afraid of the joys of eternity, you will think it a dull task to read any other books. When it is the care of your soul to be humble, holy, pure, and heavenly-minded; when you know anything of the guilt and misery of sin, or feel a real need of salvation, then you will find religious and truly spiritual books to be the greatest feast and joy of your mind and heart.' Yes. And then we shall thank God every day we live that He raised us up such helpers in our salvation as the gifted and gracious authors we have been speaking of.

5. 'The further I go the more danger I meet with,' said old Timorous, the father, to Christian, when Christian asked him on the Hill Difficulty why he was running the wrong way. 'I, too,

was going to the City of Zion,' he said; 'but the further on I go the more danger I meet with.' And, in saying that, the old runaway gave our persevering pilgrim something to think about for all his days. For, again and again, and times without number, Christian would have gone back too if only he had known where to go. Go on, therefore, he must. To go back to him was simply impossible. Every day he lived he felt the bitter truth of what that old apostate had so unwittingly said. But, with all that, he kept himself in his onward way till, dangers and difficulties, death and hell and all, he came to the blessed end of it. And that same has been the universal experience of all the true and out-and-out saints of God in all time. If poor old Timorous had only known it, if he had only had some one beside him to remind him of it, the very thing that so fatally turned him back was the best proof possible that he was on the right and the only right way; ay, and fast coming, poor old castaway, to the very city he had at one time set out to seek. Now, it is only too likely that there are some of my hearers at this with it to-night, that they are on the point of giving up the life of faith, and hope, and love, and holy living; because the deeper they carry that life into their own hearts the more impossible they find it to live that life there. The more they aim their hearts at God's law the more they despair of ever coming within sight of it. My supremely miserable brother! if this is any consolation to you, if you can take any crumb of consolation out of it, let this be told you, that, as a

matter of fact, all truly holy men have in their heart of hearts had your very experience. That is no strange and unheard-of thing which is passing within you. And, indeed, if you could but believe it, that is one of the surest signs and seals of a true and genuine child of God. Dante, one of the bravest, but hardest bestead of God's saints, was, just like you, well-nigh giving up the mountain altogether when his Greatheart, who was always at his side, divining what was going on within him, said to him—

'Those scars
That when they pain thee most then kindliest heal.'

'The more I do,' complained one of Thomas Shepard's best friends to him, 'the worse I am.' 'The best saints are the most sensible of sin,' wrote Samuel Rutherford. And, again he wrote, 'Sin rages far more in the godly than ever it does in the ungodly.' And you dare not deny but that Samuel Rutherford was one of the holiest men that ever lived, or that in saying all that he was speaking of himself. And Newman: 'Every one who tries to do God's will'—and that also is Newman himself—'will feel himself to be full of all imperfection and sin; and the more he succeeds in regulating his heart, the more will he discern its original bitterness and guilt.' As our own hymn has it:

'They who fain would serve Thee best
Are conscious most of wrong within.'

Without knowing it, Mrs. Timorous's runaway father was speaking the same language as the

chief of the saints. Only he said, 'Therefore I have turned back,' whereas, first Christian, and then Christiana his widow, said, 'Yet I must venture!'

And so say you. Say, I must and I will venture! Say it; clench your teeth and your hands and say it. Say that you are determined to go on towards heaven where the holy are—absolutely determined, though you are quite well aware that you are carrying up with you the blackest, the wickedest, the most corrupt, and the most abominable heart either out of hell or in it. Say that, say all that, and still venture. Say all that and all the more venture. Venture upon God of whom such reassuring things are said. Venture upon the Son of God of whom His Father is represented as saying such inviting things. Venture upon the cross. Survey the wondrous cross and then make a bold venture upon it. Think who that is who is bleeding to death upon the cross, and why? Look at Him till you never afterwards can see anything else. Look at God's Eternal, Divine, Well-pleasing Son with all the wages of sin dealt out to Him, body and soul, on that tree to the uttermost farthing. And, devil incarnate though you indeed are, yet, say, if that spectacle does not satisfy you, and encourage you, and carry your cowardice captive. Venture! I say, venture! And if you find at last that you have ventured too far—if you have sinned and corrupted yourself beyond redemption—then it will be some consolation and distinction to you in hell that you had out-sinned the infinite grace

of God, and had seen the end of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Timid sinner, I but mock thee, therefore venture! Fearful sinner, venture! Cowardly sinner, venture Venture thyself upon thy God, upon Christ thy Saviour, and upon His cross Venture all thy guilt and all thy corruption taken together upon Christ hanging upon His cross, and make that tremendous venture now!

XXXV

MERCY

'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
—*Our Lord.*

THE first time that we see Mercy she is standing one sunshine morning knocking along with another at Christiana's door. And all that we afterwards hear of Mercy might be described as, A morning call and all that came of it; or, How a godly matron led on a poor maid to fall in love with her own salvation. John Bunyan, her biographer, in all his devotion to Mercy, does not make it at all clear to us why such a sweet and good girl as Mercy was could be on such intimate terms with Mrs. Timorous and all her so questionable circle. Could it be that Mercy's mother was one of that unhappy set? And had this dear little woman-child been brought up so as to know no better than to figure in their assemblies, and go out on their morning rounds with Mrs. Light-mind and Mrs. Know-nothing? Or, was poor Mercy an orphan with no one to watch over her, and had her sweet face, her handsome figure, and her winning manners made her one of the attractions of old Madam Wanton's midnight routs? However it came about, there was Mercy out on a series of morning calls

with a woman twice her age, but a woman whose many years had taught her neither womanliness nor wisdom. 'If you come in God's name, come in,' a voice from the inside answered the knocking of Mrs. Timorous and Mercy, her companion, at Christiana's door. In all their rounds that morning the two women had not been met with another salutation like that; and that strange salutation so disconcerted and so confounded them that they did not know whether to lift the latch and go in, or to run away and leave those to go in who could take their delight in such outlandish language. 'If you come in God's name, come in.' At this the women were stunned, for this kind of language they used not to hear or to perceive to drop from the lips of Christiana. Yet they came in; but, behold, they found the good woman preparing to be gone from her house. The conversation that ensued was all carried on by the two elder women. For it was often remarked about Mercy all her after-days that her voice was ever soft, and gentle, and low, and, especially, seldom heard. But her ears were not idle. For all the time the debate went on—because by this time the conversation had risen to be a debate—Mercy was taking silent sides with Christiana and her distress and her intended enterprise, till, when Mrs. Timorous reviled Christiana and said, 'Come away, Mercy, and leave her in her own hands,' Mercy by that time was brought to a standstill. For, like a rose among thorns, Mercy was thoughtful and wise and womanly far beyond her years. So much so, that already she had made up her mind to offer herself as a maidservant to

help the widow with her work and to see her so far on her way, and, indeed, though she kept that to herself, to go all the way with her, if the way should prove open to her. First, her heart yearned over Christiana; so she said within herself, If my neighbour will needs be gone, I will go a little way with her to help her. Secondly, her heart yearned over her own soul's salvation, for what Christiana had said had taken some hold upon Mercy's mind. Wherefore she said within herself, I will yet have more talk with this Christiana, and if I find truth and life in what she shall say, myself with all my heart shall also go with her. 'Neighbour,' spoke out Mercy to Mrs. Timorous, 'I did indeed come with you to see Christiana this morning, and since she is, as you see, a-taking of her last farewell of her country, I think to walk this sunshine morning a little way with her to help her on the way.' But she told her not of her second reason, but kept that to herself. I would fain go on with Mercy's memoirs all night. But you will take up that inviting thread for yourselves. And meantime I shall stop here and gather up under two or three heads some of the more memorable results and lessons of that sunshine-morning call.

1. Well, then, to begin with, there was something quite queen-like, something absolutely commanding, about Christiana's look and manner, as well as about all she said and did that morning. Mercy's morning companion had all the advantages that dress and equipage could give her; while Christiana stood in the middle of the floor in her housewife's clothes,

covered with dust and surrounded with all her dismantled house; but, with all that, there was something about Christiana that took Mercy's heart completely captive. All that Christiana had by this time come through had blanched her cheek and whitened her hair: but all that only the more commanded Mercy's sensitive and noble soul. To be open to impressions of that kind is one of the finest endowments of a finely endowed nature; and, all through, the attentive reader of her history will be sure to remark and imitate Mercy's exquisite and tenacious sensibility to all that is true and good, upright and honourable and noble. And then, what a blessing it is to a girl of Mercy's mould to meet at opening womanhood with another woman, be it a mother, a mistress, or a neighbour, whose character then, and as life goes on, can supply the part of the supporting and sheltering oak to the springing and clinging vine. Christiana being now the new woman she was, as well as a woman of great natural wisdom, dignity, and stability of character, the safety, the salvation of poor motherless Mercy was as good as sure. Indeed, all Mercy's subsequent history is only one long and growing tribute to the worth, the constant love, and the sleepless solicitude of this true mother in Israel.

2. Now, it was so, that, wholly unknown to all her companions, young and old, in her own very remarkable words, Mercy had for a long time been hungering with all her heart to meet with some genuinely good people,—with some people, as she said herself, 'of truth and of life.' These are remark-

able words to hear drop from the lips of a young girl, and especially a girl of Mercy's environment. Now, had there been anything hollow, had there been one atom of insincerity or exaggeration about Christiana that morning, had she talked too much, had all her actions not far more than borne out all her words, had there not been in the broken-hearted woman a depth of mind and a warmth of heart far beyond all her words, Mercy would never have become a pilgrim. But the natural dignity of Christiana's character; her capable, commanding, resolute ways; the reality, even to agony, of her sorrow for her past life—all taken together with her iron-fast determination to enter at once on a new life—all that carried Mercy's heart completely captive. Mercy felt that there was a solemnity, an awesomeness, and a mystery about her new friend's experiences and memories that it was not for a child like herself to attempt to intrude into. But, all the more because of that, a spell of love and fear and reverence lay on Mercy's heart and mind all her after-days from that so solemn and so eventful morning when she first saw Christiana's haggard countenance and heard her remorseful cries. My so churlish carriages to him! Now, such carriages between man and wife had often pained and made ashamed Mercy's maidenly heart beyond all expression. Till she had sometimes said to herself, blushing with shame before herself as she said it, that if ever she was a wife—may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth before I say one churlish word to him who is my husband! And thus it was that nothing that Christiana said that morning in the

uprush of her remorse moved Mercy more with pity and with love than just what Christiana beat her breast about as concerning her lost husband. Mercy used to say that she saw truth and life enough in one hour that morning to sober and to solemnise and to warn her to set a watch on the door of her lips for all her after-days.

3. Before Mrs. Timorous was well out of the door, Mercy had already plucked off her gloves, and hung up her morning bonnet on a nail in the wall, so much did her heart heave to help the cumbered widow and her fatherless children. 'If thou wilt, I will hire thee,' said Christiana, 'and thou shalt go with me as my servant. Yet we will have all things common betwixt thee and me; only, now thou art here, go along with me.' At this Mercy fell on Christiana's neck and kissed her mother; for after that morning Christiana had always a daughter of her own, and Mercy a mother. And you may be sure, with two such women working with all their might, all things were soon ready for their happy departure.

Mr. Kerr Bain invites his readers to compare John Bunyan's Mercy at this point with William Law's Miranda. I shall not tarry to draw out the full comparison here, but shall content myself with simply repeating Mr. Bain's happy reference. Only, I shall not content myself till all to whom my voice can reach, and who are able to enjoy only a first-rate book, have Mr. Bain's book beside their *Pilgrim's Progress*. That morning, then, on which Mrs. Timorous, having nothing to do at home, set out with Mercy on a round of calls—that was Mercy's

last idle morning for all her days. For her mind was, ever after that, to be always busying of herself in doing, for when she had nothing to do for herself she would be making of hosen and garments for others, and would bestow them upon those that had need. I will warrant her a good housewife, quoth Mr. Brisk to himself. So much so that at any place they stopped on the way, even for a day and a night to rest and refresh themselves, Mercy would seek out all the poor and all the old people, and ere ever she was aware what she was doing, already a good report had spread abroad concerning the pilgrims and their pilgrimage. At the same time, it must be told that poor Mercy's heart was more heavy for the souls of the poor people than for their naked bodies and hungry bellies. So much was this so that when the shepherds, Knowledge, Experience, Watchful, and Sincere, took her to a place where she saw one Fool and one Want-wit washing of an Ethiopian with intention to make him white, but the more they washed him the blacker he was, Mercy blushed and felt guilty before the shepherds,—she so took home to her charitable heart the bootless work of Fool and Want-wit. Mercy put on the Salvationist bonnet at her first outset to the Celestial City, and she never put it off till she came to that land where there are no more poor to make hosen and hats for, and no more Ethiopians to take to the fountain.

4. There are not a few young communicants here to-night, as well as not a few who are afraid as yet to offer themselves for the Lord's table; and, as it so falls out to-night, Mercy's case contains both an encouragement and an example to all such. For

never surely had a young communicant less to go upon than Mercy had that best morning of all her life. For she had nothing to go upon but a great desire to help Christiana with her work; some desire for truth and for life; and some first and feeble yearnings over her own soul,—yearnings, however, that she kept entirely to herself. That was all. She had no remorses like those which had ploughed up Christiana's cheeks into such channels of tears. She had no dark past out of which swarms of hornets stung her guilty conscience. Nor, on the other hand, had she any such sweet dreams and inviting visions as those that were sent to cheer and encourage the disconsolate widow. She will have her own sweet dreams yet, that will make her laugh loud out in her sleep. But that will be long after this, when she has discovered how hard her heart is and how great God's grace is. 'How shall I be ascertained,' she put it to Christiana, 'that I also shall be entertained? Had I but this hope, from one that can tell, I would make no stick at all, but would go, being helped by Him that can help, though the way was never so tedious. Had I as good hope for a loving reception as you have, I think no Slough of Despond would discourage me.' 'Well,' said the other, 'you know your sore, and I know mine; and, good friend, we shall all have enough evil before we come to our journey's end.' And soon after that, of all places on the upward way, Mercy's evil began at the Wicket Gate. 'I have a companion,' said Christiana, 'that stands without. One that is much dejected in her mind, for that she comes, as she thinks, without sending for; whereas I was sent to

by my husband's King.' So the porter opened the gate and looked out; but Mercy was fallen down in a swoon, for she fainted and was afraid that the gate would not be opened to her. 'O sir,' she said, 'I am faint; there is scarce life left in me.' But he answered her that one once said, 'When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in into Thee, into Thy holy temple. Fear not, but stand up upon thy feet, and tell me wherefore thou art come.' 'I am come, sir, into that for which I never was invited, as my friend Christiana was. Her invitation was from the Lord, and mine was but from her. Wherefore, I fear that I presume.' Then said he to those that stood by, 'Fetch something and give it to Mercy to smell on, thereby to stay her fainting.' So they fetched her a bundle of myrrh, and a while after she revived.—Let young communicants be content with Mercy's invitation. She started for the City just because she liked to be beside a good woman who was starting thither. She wished to help a good woman who was going thither; and just a little desire began at first to awaken in her heart to go to the city too. Till, having once set her face to go up, one thing after another worked together to lead her up till she, too, had her life full of those invitations and experiences and interests and occupations and enjoyments that make Mercy's name so memorable, and her happy case such an example and such an inspiration, to all God-fearing young women especially.

5. John Bunyan must be held responsible for the strong dash of romance that he so boldly throws

into Mercy's memoirs. But I shall postpone Mr. Brisk and his love-making and his answer to another lecture. I shall not enter on Mercy's love matters here at all, but shall leave them to be read at home by those who like to read romances. Only, since we have seen so much of Mercy as a maiden, one longs to see how she turned out as a wife. I can only imagine how Mercy turned out as a wife; but there is a picture of a Scottish Covenanting girl as a married wife which always rises up before my mind when I think of Mercy's matronly days. That picture might hang in Bunyan's own peculiar gallery, so beautiful is the drawing, and so warm and so eloquent the colouring. Take, then, this portrait of one of the daughters of the Scottish Covenant. 'She was a woman of great worth, whom I therefore passionately loved and inwardly honoured. A stately, beautiful, and comely personage; truly pious and fearing the Lord. Of an evenly temper, patient in our common tribulations and under her personal distresses. A woman of bright natural parts, and of an uncommon stock of prudence; of a quick and lively apprehension in things she applied herself to, and of great presence of mind in surprising incidents. Sagacious and acute in discerning the qualities of persons, and therefore not easily imposed upon. [See Mr. Brisk's interviews with Mercy.] Modest and grave in her deportment, but naturally cheerful; wise and affable in conversation, also having a good faculty at speaking and expressing herself with assurance. Being a pattern of frugality and wise management in household affairs, all such were therefore entirely committed to her; well fitted for

and careful of the virtuous education of her children; remarkably useful in the countryside, both in the Merse and in the Forest, through her skill in physic and surgery, which in many instances a peculiar blessing appeared to be commanded upon from heaven. And, finally, a crown to me in my public station and pulpit appearances. During the time we have lived together we have passed through a sea of trouble, as yet not seeing the shore but afar off.'

'The words of King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him. What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows? Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.'

XXXVI

MR. BRISK

'Be ye not unequally yoked.'—*Paul.*

THERE were some severe precisians in John Bunyan's day who took the objection to the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress* that he sometimes laughed too loud.

> 'One may (I think) say, both he laughs and cries,
> May well be guessed at by his watery eyes.
> Some things are of that nature as to make
> One's fancy chuckle while his heart doth ake.
> When Jacob saw his Rachel with the sheep,
> At the same time he did both laugh and weep.'

And even Dr. Cheever, in his excellent lectures on the *Pilgrim's Progress*, confesses that though the Second Part never ceases for a moment to tell the serious story of the Pilgrimage, at the same time, it sometimes becomes so merry as almost to pass over into absolute comedy. 'There is one passage,' says Cheever, 'which for exquisite humour, quiet satire, and naturalness in the development of character is scarcely surpassed in the language. It is the account of the courtship between Mr. Brisk and Mercy which took place at the House Beautiful.'

Now, the insertion of such an episode as that of Mr. Brisk into such a book as the *Pilgrim's Progress* is only yet another proof of the health, the strength,

and the truth to nature of John Bunyan's mind. His was eminently an honest, straightforward, manly, English understanding. A smaller man would not have ventured on Mr. Brisk in such a book as the *Pilgrim's Progress*. But there is no affectation, there is no prudery, there is no superiority to nature in John Bunyan. He knew quite well that of the thousands of men and women who were reading his *Pilgrim* there was no subject, not even religion itself, that was taking up half so much of their thoughts as just love-making and marriage. And, like the wise man and the true teacher he was, he here points out to all his readers how well true religion and the fullest satisfaction of the warmest and the most universal of human affections can be both harmonised and made mutually helpful. In Bunyan's day love was too much left to the playwrights, just as in our day it is too much left to the poets and the novelists. And thus it is that in too many instances affection and passion have taken full possession of the hearts and the lives of our young people before any moral or religious lesson on these all-important subjects has been given to them: any lesson such as John Bunyan so winningly and so beautifully gives here. 'This incident,' says Thomas Scott, 'is very properly introduced, and it is replete with instruction.'

Now, Mr. Brisk, to begin with, was, so we are told, a young man of some breeding,—that is to say, he was a young man of some social position, some education, and of a certain good manner, at least on the surface. In David Scott's Illustrations Mr. Brisk stands before us a handsome and well-dressed

young man of the period, with his well-belted doublet, his voluminous ruffles, his heavily-studded cuffs, his small cane, his divided hair, and his delicate hand,—altogether answering excellently to his name, were it not for the dashed look of surprise with which he gets his answer, and, with what jauntiness he can at the moment command, takes his departure. 'Mr. Brisk was a man of some breeding,' says Bunyan, 'and that pretended to religion; but a man that stuck very close to the world.' That Mr. Brisk made any pretence to religion at any other time and in any other place is not said; only that he put on that pretence with his best clothes when he came once or twice or more to Mercy and offered love to her at the House Beautiful. The man with the least religion at other times, even the man with no pretence to religion at other times at all, will pretend to some religion when he is in love with a young woman of Mercy's mind. And yet it would not be fair to say that it is all pretence even in such a man at such a time. Grant that a man is really in love; then, since all love is of the nature of religion, for the time, the true lover is really on the borders of a truly religious life. It may with perfect truth be said of all men when they first fall in love that they are, for the time, not very far away from the kingdom of heaven. For all love is good, so far as it goes. God is Love; and all love, in the long-run, has a touch of the divine nature in it. And for once, if never again, every man who is deeply in love has a far-off glimpse of the beauty of holiness, and a far-off taste of that ineffable sweetness of which the satisfied saints of

God sing so ecstatically. But, in too many instances, a young man's love having been kindled only by the creature, and, never rising from her to his and her Creator, as a rule, it sooner or later burns low and at last burns out, and leaves nothing but embers and ashes in his once so ardent heart. Mr. Brisk's love-making might have ended in his becoming a pilgrim but for this fatal flaw in his heart, that even in his love-making he stuck so fast to the world. It is almost incredible: you may well refuse to believe it—that any young man in love, and especially a young gentleman of Mr. Brisk's breeding, would approach his mistress with the question how much she could earn a day. As Mr. Brisk looks at Mercy's lap so full of hats and hosen and says it, I can see his natty cane beginning to lengthen itself out in his soft-skinned hand and to send out teeth like a muck-rake. Give Mr. Brisk another thirty years or so and he will be an ancient churl, raking to himself the sticks and the straws and the dust of the earth, neither looking up to nor regarding the celestial crown that is still offered to him in exchange for his instrument.

'Now, Mercy was of a fair countenance, and, therefore, all the more alluring.' But her fair countenance was really no temptation to her. 'Sit still, my daughter,' said Naomi to Ruth in the Old Testament. And it was entirely Mercy's maidenly nature to sit still. Even before she had come to her full womanhood under Christiana's motherly care she would have been an example to Ruth. Long ago, while Mercy was still a mere girl, when Mrs. Light-mind said something to her one day

that made her blush, Mercy at last looked up in real anger and said, We women should be wooed; we were not made to woo. And thus it was that all their time at the House Beautiful Mercy stayed close at home and worked with her needle and thread just as if she had been the plainest girl in all the town. 'I might have had husbands afore now,' she said, with a cast of her head over the coat that lay on her lap, 'though I spake not of it to any. But they were such as did not like my conditions, though never did any of them find fault with my person. So they and I could not agree.' Once Mercy's mouth was opened on the subject of possible husbands it is a miracle that she did not go on in confidence to name some of the husbands she might have had. Mercy was too truthful and too honourable a maiden to have said even on that subject what she did say if it had not been true. No doubt she believed it true. And the belief, so long as she mentioned no names, did not break any man's bones and did not spoil any man's market. Don't set up too prudishly and say that it is a pity that Mercy so far forgot herself as to make her little confidential boast. We would not have had her without that little boast. Keep-at-home, sit-still, hats and hosen and all—her little boast only proves Mercy to have been at heart a true daughter of Eve after all.

There is an old-fashioned word that comes up again and again in the account of Mr. Brisk's courtship,—a word that contains far more interest and instruction for us than might on the surface appear. When Mr. Brisk was rallied upon his ill-success with Mercy, he was wont to say that un-

doubtedly Mistress Mercy was a very pretty lass, only she was troubled with ill conditions. And then, when Mercy was confiding to Prudence all about her possible husbands, she said that they were all such as did not like her conditions. To which Prudence, keeping her countenance, replied, that the men were but few in their day that could abide the practice that was set forth by such conditions as those of Mercy. Well, tossed out Mercy, if nobody will have me I will die a maid, or my conditions shall be to me as a husband! As I came again and again across that old seventeenth-century word 'conditions,' I said to myself, I feel sure that Dr. Murray of the Oxford Scriptorium will have noted this striking passage. And on turning up the Sixth Part of the *New English Dictionary*, there, to be sure, was the old word standing in this present setting. Five long, rich, closely packed columns stood under the head of 'Condition'; and amid a thousand illustrations of its use, the text: '1684, Bunyan, *Pilgr.*, ii. 84. He said that Mercy was a pretty lass, but troubled with ill conditions.' Poor illiterate John Bunyan stood in the centre of a group of learned and famous men, composed of Chaucer, Wyclif, Skelton, Palsgrave, Raleigh, Featly, Richard Steel, and Walter Scott—all agreeing in their use of our word, and all supplying examples of its use in the best English books. By Mercy's conditions, then, is just meant her cast of mind, her moral nature, her temper and her temperament, her dispositions and her inclinations, her habits of thought, habits of heart, habits of life, and so on.

'Well.' said Mercy proudly, 'if nobody will have

me, I will die a maid, or my conditions shall be to me as a husband. For I cannot change my nature, and to have one that lies cross to me in this,—that I purpose never to admit of as long as I live.' By this time, though she is still little more than a girl, Mercy had her habits formed, her character cast, and, more than all, her whole heart irrevocably set on her soul's salvation. And everything—husband and children and all—must condition themselves to that, else she will have none of them. She had sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and she will seek nothing, she will accept nothing—no, not even a husband—who crosses her choice in that. She has chosen her life, and her husband with it. Not the man as yet, but the whole manner of the man. The conditions of the man, as she said about herself; else she will boldly and bravely die a maid. And there are multitudes of married women who, when they read this page about Mercy, will gnash their teeth at the madness of their youth, and will wildly wish that they only were maids again; and, then, like Mercy, they would take good care to make for themselves husbands of their own conditions too—of their own means, their own dispositions, inclinations, tastes, and pursuits. For, according as our conditions to one another are or are not in our marriages,

> 'They locally contain or heaven or hell;
> There is no third place in them.'

What untold good, then, may all our young women not get out of the loving study of Mercy's sweet, steadfast, noble character! And what untold misery

may they not escape! From first to last—and we are not yet come to her last—I most affectionately recommend Mercy to the hearts and minds of all young women here. Single and married; setting out on pilgrimage and steadfastly persevering in it; sitting still till the husband with the right conditions comes, and then rising up with her warm, well-kept heart to meet him—if any maiden here has no mother, or no elder sister, or no wise and prudent friend like Prudence or Christiana to take counsel of—and even if she has—let Mercy be her meditation and her model through all her maidenly days.

'Nay, then,' said Mercy, 'I will look no more on him, for I purpose never to have a clog to my soul.' A pungent resolve for every husband to read and to think to himself about, who has married a wife with a soul. Let all husbands who have such wives halt here and ask themselves with some imagination as to what may sometimes go on, at communion times, say, in the souls of their wives. It is not every wife, it is true, who has a soul to clog; but some of our wives have. Well, now, let us ask ourselves: How do we stand related to their souls? Do our wives, when examining the state of their souls since they married us, have to say that at one time they had hoped to be further on in the life of the soul than they yet are? And are they compelled before God to admit that the marriage they have made, and would make, has terribly hindered them? Would they have been better women, would they have been living a better life, and doing far more good in the world, if they had taken their maidenly ideals, like Mercy,

for a husband? Let us sometimes imagine ourselves into the secrets of our wives' souls, and ask if they ever feel that they are unequally and injuriously yoked in their deepest and best life. Do we ever see a tear falling in secret, or hear a stolen sigh heaved, or stumble on them at a stealthy prayer? A Roman lady on being asked why she sometimes let a sob escape her and a tear fall, when she had such a gentleman of breeding and rank and riches to her husband, touched her slipper with her finger and said: 'Is not that a well-made, a neat, and a costly shoe? And yet you would not believe how it pinches and pains me sometimes.'

But some every whit as good women as Mercy was have purposed as nobly and as firmly as Mercy did, and yet have wakened up, when it was too late, to find that, with all their high ideals, and with all their prudence, their husband is not in himself, and is not to them, what they at one time felt sure he would be. Mercy had a sister named Bountiful, who made that mistake and that dreadful discovery; and what Mercy had seen of married life in her sister's house almost absolutely turned her against marriage altogether. 'The one thing certain,' says Thomas Mozley in his chapter on Ideal Wife and Husband, 'is that both wife and husband are different in the result from the expectation. Age, illness, an increasing family, no family at all, household cares, want of means, isolation, incompatible prejudices, quarrels, social difficulties, and such like, all tell on married people, and make them far other than they once promised to be.' When that awakening comes there is only one solace, and women take

to that supreme solace much more often than men. And that solace, as you all know, is true, if too late, religion. And even where true religion has already been, there is still a deeper and a more inward religion suited to the new experiences and the new needs of life. And if both husband and wife in such a crisis truly betake themselves to Him who gathereth the solitary into families, the result will be such a remarriage of depth and tenderness, loyalty and mutual help, as their early dreams never came within sight of. Not early love, not children, not plenty of means, not all the best amenities of married life taken together, will repair a marriage and keep a marriage in repair for one moment like a living and an intense faith in God; a living and an intense love to God; and then that faith in and love for one another that spring out of God and out of His love alone.

'The tree
Sucks kindlier nurture from a soil enriched
By its own fallen leaves; and man is made,
In heart and spirit, from deciduous hopes
And things that seem to perish.'

XXXVII

MR. SKILL

'The vine of Sodom.'—*Moses.*

WITH infinite delicacy John Bunyan here tells us the sad story of Matthew's sore sickness at the House Beautiful. The cause of the sore sickness, its symptoms, its serious nature, and its complete cure, are all told with the utmost plainness; but, at the same time, with the most exquisite delicacy. Bunyan calls the ancient physician who is summoned in and who effects the cure, Mr. Skill, but you must believe that Bunyan himself is Mr. Skill; and I question if this skilful writer ever wrote a more skilful page than just this page that now lies open before him who has the eyes to read it.

Matthew, it must always be remembered, was by this time a young man. He was the eldest son of Christiana his mother, and for some time now she had been a sorely burdened widow. Matthew's father was no longer near his son to watch over him and to warn him against the temptations and the dangers that wait on opening manhood. And thus his mother, with all her other cares, had to be both father and mother to her eldest son; and, with all her good sense and all her long and close acquaintance with the world, she was too fond a mother

to suspect any evil of her eldest son. And thus it was that Christiana had nearly lost her eldest son before her eyes were open to the terrible dangers he had for a long time been running. For it was so, that the upward way that this household without a head had to travel lay through a land full of all kinds of dangers both to the bodies and to the souls of such travellers as they were. And what well-nigh proved a fatal danger to Matthew lay right in his way. It was Beelzebub's orchard. Not that this young man's way lay through that orchard exactly; yet, walled up as was that orchard with all its forbidden fruit, that evil fruit would hang over the wall so that if any lusty youth wished to taste it, he had only to reach up to the over-hanging branches and plash down on himself some of the forbidden bunches. Now, that was just what Matthew had done. Till we have him lying at the House Beautiful, not only not able to enjoy the delights of the House and of the season, but so pained in his bowels, and so pulled together with inward pains, that he sometimes cried out as if he were being torn to pieces. At that moment Mr. Skill, the ancient physician, entered the sick-room, when, having a little observed Matthew's intense agony, with a certain mixture of goodness and severity he recited these professional verses over the trembling bed:

> 'O conscience, who can stand against thy power?
> Endure thy gripes and agonies one hour?
> Stone, gout, strappado, racks, whatever is
> Dreadful to sense, are only toys to this—
> No pleasures, riches, honours, friends can tell
> How to give ease to this, 'tis like to hell.'

And then, turning to the sick man's mother, who stood at the bed's head wringing her hands, the ancient leech said to her: 'This boy of yours has been tampering with the forbidden fruit!' At which the angry mother turned on the well-approved physician as if he had caused all the trouble that he had come to cure. But the ancient man knew both the son and the mother too, and therefore he addressed her with some asperity: 'I tell you both that strong measures must be taken instantly, else he will die.' When Mr. Skill had seen that the first purge was too weak, he made him one to the purpose; and it was made, as he so learnedly said, *ex carne et sanguine Christi.* The pills were to be taken three at a time, fasting, in half a quarter of a pint of the tears of repentance. After some coaxing, such as mothers know best how to use, Matthew took the medicine and was soon walking about again with a staff, and was able to go from room to room of the hospitable and happy house. Understandest thou what thou readest? said Philip the deacon to Queen Candace's treasurer as he sat down beside him in the chariot and opened up to him the fifty-third of the prophet Isaiah. And, understandest thou what thou here readest in Matthew and Mr. Skill?

1. Now, on this almost too closely veiled case I shall venture to remark, in the first place, that multitudes of boys grow up into young men, and go out of our most godly homes and into a whole world of temptation without due warning being given them as to where they are going. 'I do marvel that none did warn him of it,' said Mr.

Skill, with some anger. What Matthew's father might have done in this matter had he been still in this world when his son became a man in it we can only guess. As it was, it never entered his mother's too fond mind to take her fatherless boy by himself when she saw Beelzebub's orchard before him, and tell him what Solomon told his son, and to point out to him the prophecy that King Lemuel's mother prophesied to her son. Poor Matthew was a young man before his mother was aware of it. And, poor woman, she only found that out when Mr. Skill was in the sick-room and was looking at her with eyes that seemed to say to her that she had murdered her child. She had loved too long to look on her first-born as still a child. When he went at any time for a season out of her sight, she had never followed him with her knowledge of the world; she had never prevented him with an awakened and an anxious imagination; till now she had got him home with no rest in his bones because of his sin. And then she began to cry too late, O naughty boy, and, O careless mother, what shall I do for my son!

2. 'That food, to wit, that fruit,' said Mr. Skill, 'is even the most hurtful of all. It is the fruit of Beelzebub's orchard.' So it is. There is no fruit that hurts at all like that fruit. How it hurts at the time, we see in Matthew's sick-room; and how it hurts all a man's after days we see in Jacob, and in Job, and in David, and in a thousand sin-sick souls of whose psalms of remorse and repentance the world cannot contain all the books that should be written. 'And yet I marvel,' said the indignant

physician, 'that none did warn him of it; many have died thereof.' Oh if I could but get the ears of all the sons of godly fathers and mothers who are beginning to tamper with Beelzebub's orchard-trees, I feel as if I could warn them to-night, and out of this text, of what they are doing! I have known so many who have died thereof. Oh if I could but save them in time from those gripes of conscience that will pull them to pieces on the softest and the most fragrant bed that shall ever be made for them on earth! It will be well with them if they do not lie down torn to pieces on their bed in hell, and curse the day they first plashed down into their youthful hands the vine of Sodom. Both the way to hell and the way to heaven are full of many kinds of hurtful fruits; but that species of fruit that poor misguided Matthew plucked and ate after he had well passed the gate that is at the head of the way is, by all men's testimony, by far the most hurtful of all forbidden fruits.

3. The whole scene in Matthew's sick-room reads, after all, less like a skilful invention than a real occurrence. Inventive and realistic as John Bunyan is, there is surely something here that goes beyond even his genius. After making all allowance for Bunyan's unparalleled powers of creation and narration, I am inclined to think, the oftener I read it, that, after all, we have not so much John Bunyan here as very Nature herself. Yes; John Gifford surely was Mr. Skill. Sister Bosworth surely was Matthew's mother. And Matthew himself was Sister Bosworth's eldest son, while one John Bunyan, a travelling tinker, was busy with his

furnaces and his soldering-irons in Dame Bosworth's kitchen. Young Bunyan, with all his blackguardism, had never plashed down Beelzebub's orchard. He swears he never did, and we are bound to believe him. But young Bosworth had been tampering with the forbidden fruit, and Gifford saw at a glance what was wrong. John Gifford was first an officer in the Royalist army, then a doctor in Bedford, and now a Baptist Puritan pastor; and the young tinker looked up to Gifford as the most wonderful man for learning in books and in bodies and souls of men in all the world. And when Gifford talked over young Bosworth's bed half to himself and half to them about a medicine made *ex carne et sanguine Christi*, the future author of the *Pilgrim's Progress* never forgot the phrase. At a glance Gifford saw what was the whole matter with the sick man. And painful as the truth was to the sick man's mother, and humiliating with a life-long humiliation to the sick man himself, Gifford was not the man or the minister to beat about the bush at such a solemn moment. 'This boy has been tampering with that which will kill him unless he gets it taken off his conscience and out of his heart immediately.' Now, this same divination into our pastoral cases is by far and away the most difficult part of a minister's work. It is easy and pleasant with a fluent tongue to get through our pulpit work; but to descend the pulpit stairs and deal with life, and with this and that sin in the lives of our people,—that is another matter. 'We must labour,' says Richard Baxter in his *Reformed Pastor*, 'to be acquainted with the state of all our people as fully as we can; both to know the

persons and their inclinations and conversation; to know what sins they are most in danger of, what duties they neglect, and what temptations they are most liable to. For, if we know not their temperament or their disease, we are likely to prove but unsuccessful physicians.' But when we begin to reform our pastorate to that pattern, we are soon compelled to set down such entries in our secret diary as that of Thomas Shepard of Harvard University: 'Sabbath, 5th April 1641. Nothing I do, nay, none under my shadow prosper. I so want wisdom for my place, and to guide others.' Yes; for what wisdom is needed for the place of a minister like John Gifford, John Bunyan, Richard Baxter, and Thomas Shepard! What wisdom, what divine genius, to dive into and divine the secret history of a soul from a twinge of conscience, even from a drop of the eye, a tone of the voice, or a gesture of the hand or of the head! And yet, with some natural taste for the holy work, with study, with experience, and with life-long expert reading, even a plain minister with no genius, but with some grace and truth, may come to great eminence in the matters of the soul. And then, with what an interest, solemn and awful, with what a sleepless interest such a pastor goes about among his diseased, sin-torn, and scattered flock! All their souls are naked and open under his divining eye. They need not to tell him where they ail, and of what sickness they are nigh unto death. That food, he says, with some sternness over their sick-bed, I warned you of it; I told you with all plainness that many have died of eating that fruit! 'We

must be ready,' Baxter continues, 'to give advice to those that come to us with cases of conscience. A minister is not only for public preaching, but to be a known counsellor for his people's souls as the lawyer is for their estates, and the physician is for their bodies. And because the people are grown unacquainted with this office of the ministry, and their own necessity and duty herein, it belongeth to us to acquaint them herewith, and to press them publicly to come to us for advice concerning their souls. We must not only be willing of the trouble, but draw it upon ourselves by inviting them hereto. To this end it is very necessary to be acquainted with practical cases and able to assist them in trying their states. One word of seasonable and prudent advice hath done that good that many sermons would not have done.'

4. As he went on pounding and preparing his well-approved pill, the (at the bottom of his heart) kind old leech talked encouragingly to the mother and to her sick son, and said: 'Come, come; after all, do not be too much cast down. Had we lived in the days of the old medicine, I would have been compounding a purge out of the blood of a goat, and the ashes of an heifer, and the juice of hyssop. But I have a far better medicine under my hands here. This moment I will make you a purge to the purpose.' And then the learned man, half-doctor, half-divine, chanted again the sacred incantation as he bent over his pestle and mortar, saying: *Ex carne et sanguine Christi!* Those shrewd old eyes soon saw that, in spite of all their defences and all their denials, damage had been done to the conscience and the heart that nothing would

set right but a frank admission of the evil that had been done, and a prompt submission to the regimen appointed and the medicine prepared. And how often we ministers puddle and peddle with goat's blood and heifer's ashes and hyssop juice when we should instantly prescribe stern fasting and secret prayer and long spaces of repentance, and then the body and the blood of Christ. How often our people cheat us into healing their hurt slightly! How often they succeed in putting us off, after we are called in, with their own account of their cases, and set us out on a wild-goose chase! I myself have more than once presented young men in their trouble with apologetic books, University sermons, and watered-down explanations of the Confession and the Catechism, when, had I known all I came afterwards to know, I would have sent them Bunyan's *Sighs from Hell.* I have sent soul-sick women also *The Bruised Reed,* and *The Mission of the Comforter* with sympathising inscriptions, and sweet scriptures written inside, when, had I had Mr. Skill's keen eyes in my stupid head, I would have gone to them with the total abstinence pledge in my one hand, and Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying* in my other. 'No diet but that which is wholesome!' almost in anger answered the sick man's mother. 'I tell you,' the honest leech replied, in more anger, 'this boy has been tampering with Beelzebub's orchard. And many have died of it!'

5. It was while all the rest of the House Beautiful were supping on lamb and wine, and while there was such music in the House that made Mercy exclaim over it with wonder — it was at

the smell of the supper and at the sound of the psalmody that Matthew's gripes seized upon him worse than ever. All the time the others sat late into the night Matthew lay on the rack pulled to pieces. After William Law's death at King's Cliffe, his executors found among his most secret papers a prayer he had composed for his own alone use on a certain communion day when he was self-debarred from the Lord's table. I do not know for certain just what fruit the young non-juror had stolen out of Beelzebub's orchard before that communion season; but I can see that he was in poor Matthew's exact experience that communion night, —literally torn to pieces with agonies of conscience while all his fellow-worshippers were at the table of the Lord. While the psalms and hymns are being sung at the supper-table, lay your ear to Law's closet door. 'Whilst all Thy faithful servants are on this day offering to Thee the comfortable sacrifice of the body and the blood of Christ, and feasting at that holy table which Thou hast ordained for the refreshment, joy, and comfort of their souls, I, unhappy wretch, full of guilt, am justly denied any share of these comforts that are common to the Christian world. O my God, I am an unclean worm, a dead dog, a stinking carcass, justly removed from that society of saints who this day kneel about Thine altar. But, oh! suffer me to look toward Thy holy sanctuary; suffer my soul again to be in the place where Thine honour dwelleth. Reject not the sacrifice of a broken heart, and do Thou be with me in secret, though I am not fit to appear in Thy

public worship. Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean. Lord, speak but the word, and Thy servant shall be healed.' It is the fruit of Beelzebub's orchard. Many have died thereof.

6. 'Pray, sir, make me up twelve boxes of them; for if I can get these, I will never take other physic.' 'These same pills,' he replied, 'are good also to prevent diseases as well as to cure when one is sick. But, good woman, thou must take these pills no other way but as I have prescribed; for if you do, they will do no good.' I have taken one illustration from William Law's life; I shall take another from that world of such illustrations and so close. 'O God, let me never see such another day as this. Let the dreadful punishment of this day never be out of my mind.' And it never was. For, after that day in hell, Law never laid down his head on his pillow that he did not seem to remember that dreadful day. William Law would have satisfied Dr. Skill for a convalescent. For he never felt that he had any right to touch the body and blood of Christ, either at communion times, or a thousand times every day, till he had again got ready his heart of true repentance. My brethren, self-destroyed out of Beelzebub's orchard, and all my brethren, live a life henceforth of true repentance. Not out of the sins of your youth only, but out of the best, the most watchful, and the most blameless day you ever live, distil your half-pint of repentance every night before you sleep. For, as dear old Skill said, unless you do, neither flesh nor blood of Christ, nor anything else, will do you any genuine good.

XXXVIII

THE SHEPHERD BOY

'He humbled Himself.'—*Paul.*

NOW as they were going along and talking, they espied a boy feeding his father's sheep. The boy was in very mean clothes, but of a very fresh and well-favoured countenance, and as he sat by himself he sang. Hark, said Mr. Greatheart, to what the shepherd boy saith. So they hearkened and he said:

He that is down, needs fear no fall;
He that is low no pride:
He that is humble, ever shall
Have God to be his guide.
I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much:
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
Because thou savest such.
Fulness to such a burden is
That go on pilgrimage:
Here little, and hereafter bliss,
Is best from age to age.

Then said their guide, Do you hear him? I will dare say that this boy lives a merrier life and wears

more of that herb called Heart's-ease in his bosom than he that is clad in silk and velvet.'

Now, notwithstanding all that, nobody knew better than John Bunyan knew, that no shepherd boy that ever lived on the face of the earth ever sang that song; only one Boy ever sang that song, and He was not the son of a shepherd at all, but the son of a carpenter. And, saying that leads me on to say this before I begin, that I look for a man of John Bunyan's inventive and sanctified genius to arise some day, and armed also to boot with all our latest and best New Testament studies. When that sorely-needed man so arises he will take us back to Nazareth where that carpenter's Boy was brought up, and he will let us see Him with our own eyes being brought up. He will lead us into Mary's house on Sabbath days, and into Joseph's workshop on week days, and he will show us the child Jesus, not so much learning His letters and then putting on His carpenter's clothes, as learning obedience by the things that He every day suffered. That choice author will show us our Lord, both before He had discovered Himself to be our Lord, as well as after He had made that great discovery, always clothing Himself with humility as with a garment; taking up His yoke of meekness and lowly-mindedness every day, and never for one moment laying it down. When some writer with as holy an imagination as that of John Bunyan, and with as sweet an English style, and with a New Testament scholarship of the first order so arises, and so addresses himself to the inward life of our Lord, what a blessing to our children

that writer will be! For he will make them see and feel just what all that was in which our Lord's perfect humility consisted, and how His perfect humility fulfilled itself in Him from day to day; up through all His childhood days, school and synagogue days, workshop and holy days, early manhood and mature manhood days; till He was so meek in all His heart and so humble in all His mind that all men were sent to Him to learn their meekness and their humility of Him. I envy that gifted man the deep delight he will have in his work, and the splendid reward he will have in the love and the debt of all coming generations. Only, may he be really sent to us, and that soon! Theodor Keim comes nearest a far-off glimpse of that eminent service of any New Testament scholar I know. Jeremy Taylor and Thomas Goodwin also, in their own time and in their own way, had occasional inspirations toward this still-waiting treatment of the master-subject of all learning and all genius—the inward sanctification, the growth in grace, and then the self-discovery of the incarnate Son of God. But, so let it please God, some contemporary scholar will arise some day soon, combining in himself Goodwin's incomparable Christology, and Taylor's incomparable eloquence, and Keim's incomparably digested learning, with John Bunyan's incomparable imagination and incomparable English style, and the waiting work will be done, and theology for this life will take on its copestone. In his absence, and till he comes, let us attempt a few annotations to-night on this so-called shepherd boy's song in the Valley of Humiliation.

He that is down, needs fear no fall.

The whole scenery of the surrounding valley is set before us in that single eloquent stanza. The sweet-voiced boy sits well off the wayside as he sings his song to himself. He looks up to the hill-tops that hang over his valley, and every shining tooth of those many hill-tops has for him its own evil legend. He thinks he sees a little heap of bleaching bones just under where that eagle hangs and wheels and screams. Not one traveller through these perilous parts in a thousand gets down those cruel rocks unhurt; and many travellers have been irrecoverably lost among those deadly rocks, and have never received Christian burial. All the shepherds' cottages and all the hostel supper-tables for many miles round are full of terrible stories of the Hill Difficulty and the Descent Dangerous. And thus it is that this shepherd boy looks up with such fear at those sharp peaks and shining precipices, and lifts his fresh and well-favoured countenance to heaven and sings again: 'He that is down, needs fear no fall.' Down in his own esteem, that is. For this is a song of the heart rather than of the highway. Down—safe, that is, from the steep and slippery places of self-estimation, self-exaltation, self-satisfaction. Down—so as to be delivered from all ambition and emulation and envy. Down, and safe, thank God, from all pride, all high-mindedness, and all stout-heartedness. Down from the hard and cruel hills, and buried deep out of sight among those meadows where that herb grows which is called Heart's-ease. Down, where the green pastures grow and the quiet waters flow.

No, indeed; he that is down into this sweet bottom needs fear no fall. For there is nowhere here for a man to fall from. And, even if he did fall, he would only fall upon a fragrance-breathing bed of lilies. The very herbs and flowers here would conspire to hold him up. Many a day, as He grew up, the carpenter's son sat in that same valley and sang that same song to His own humble and happy heart. He loved much to be here. He loved also to walk these meadows, for He found the air was pleasant. Methinks, He often said with Mercy, I am as well in this valley as I have been anywhere else in My journey. The place, methinks, suits with My spirit. I love to be in such places where there is no rattling with coaches nor rumbling with wheels. Methinks, also, here one may without much molestation be thinking what he is, whence he came, and to what his King has called him.

He that is low, no pride.

Low in his own eyes, that is. For pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Yes; but he who is low enough already—none of the sure destructions that pride always works shall ever come near to him. 'The proud man,' says Sir Henry Taylor, 'is of all men the most vulnerable. "Who calls?" asks the old shepherd in *As You Like It*. "Your betters," is the insolent answer. And what is the shepherd's rejoinder? "Else are they very wretched." By what retort, reprisal, or repartee could it have been made half so manifest that the insult had lighted upon armour

of proof? Such is the invincible independence and invulnerability of humility.'

He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

For thus saith the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the heart of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. . . . All those things hath Mine hand made, but to this man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at My word. . . . Though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly; but the proud He knoweth afar off. . . . Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. . . . Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child. . . . Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

I am content with what I have,
Little be it, or much:
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
Because thou savest such.

The only thing this sweet singer is discontented

with is his own contentment. He will not be content as long as he has a shadow of discontent left in his heart. And how blessed is such holy discontent! For, would you know, asks Law, who is the greatest saint in all the world? Well, it is not he who prays most or fasts most; it is not he who gives most alms or is most eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice. But it is he who is always thankful to God, who wills everything that God willeth, who receives everything as an instance of God's goodness, and has a heart always ready to praise God for it. 'Perhaps the shepherd's boy,' says Thomas Scott, 'may refer to the obscure and quiet stations of some pastors over small congregations, who live almost unknown to their brethren, but are in a measure useful and very comfortable.' Perhaps he does. And, whether he does or no, at any rate such a song will suit some of our brethren very well as they go about among their few and far-off flocks. They are not church leaders or popular preachers. There is not much rattling with coaches or rumbling with wheels at their church door. But, then, methinks, they have their compensation. They are without much molestation. They can be all the more thinking what they are, whence they came, and to what their King has called them. Let them be happy in their shut-in valleys. For I will dare to say that they wear more of that herb called Heart's-ease in their bosom than those ministers do they are sometimes tempted to emulate. I will add in this place that to the men who live and trace these grounds the Lord hath left a yearly revenue to be faithfully paid them

at certain seasons for their maintenance by the way, and for their further encouragement to go on in their pilgrimage.

Here little, and hereafter bliss,
Is best from age to age.

But, now, from the shepherd boy and from his valley and his song, let us go on without any more poetry or parable to look our own selves full in the face and to ask our own hearts whether they are the hearts of really humble-minded and New Testament men or no. Dr. Newman, 'that subtle, devout man,' as Dr. Duncan calls him, says that 'humility is one of the most difficult of virtues both to attain and to ascertain. It lies,' he says, 'close upon the heart itself, and its tests are exceedingly delicate and subtle. Its counterfeits abound.' Most true. And yet humility is not intended for experts in morals only, or for men of a rare religious genius only. The plainest of men, the least skilled and the most unlettered of men, may not only excel in humility, but may also be permitted to know that they are indeed planted, and are growing slowly but surely in that grace of all graces. No doubt our Lord had, so to describe it, the most delicate and the most subtle of human minds; and, no doubt whatever, He had the most practised skill in reading off what lay closest to His own heart. And, then, it was just His attainment of the most perfect humility, and then His absolute ascertainment of the same, that enabled Him to say: Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me. At the same time, divine as the grace is, and divine as the insight is

that is able to trace it out in all its exquisite refinements of thought and feeling in the sanctified soul, yet humility is a human virtue after all, and it is open to all men to attain to it and intelligently and lovingly to exercise it. The simplest and the least philosophical soul now in this house may apply to himself some of the subtlest and most sensitive tests of humility, as much as if he were Dr. Duncan or Dr. Newman themselves; and may thus with all assurance of hope know whether he is a counterfeit and a castaway or no.

Take this test for one, then. Explain this text to me: Phil. ii. 3—'In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than himself.' Explain and illustrate that. Not from a commentary, but straight out from your own heart. What does your heart make of that scripture? Does your heart turn away from that scripture almost in anger at it? Do you say you are certain that there must be some other explanation of it than that? Do you hold that this is just another of Paul's perpetual hyperboles, and that the New Testament is the last book in the world to be taken as it reads? Yes; both bold and subtle father that he is: counterfeits abound!

Another much blunter test, but, perhaps, a sufficiently sharp test, is this: How do you receive correction and instruction? Does your heart meekly and spontaneously and naturally take to correction and instruction as the most natural and proper thing possible to you? And do you immediately, and before all men, show forth and exhibit the correction and the instruction? Or, does this rather

take place? Does your heart beat, and swell, and boil, and boil over at him who dares to correct or counsel you? If this is a fair test to put our humility to, how little humility there is among us! How few men any of us could name among our friends to whom we would risk telling all the things that behind their backs we point out continually to others? We are terrified to face their pride. We once did it, and we are not to do it again, if we can help it! Let a man not have too many irons in the fire; let him examine himself just by these two tests for the time—what he thinks of himself, and what he thinks of those who attempt, and especially before other people, to set him right. And after these two tests have been satisfied, others will no doubt be supplied till that so humble man is made very humility itself.

And now, in the hope that there may be one or two men here who are really and not counterfeitly in earnest to clothe themselves with humility before God and man, let them take these two looms to themselves out of which whole webs of such garments will be delivered to them every day—their past life, and their present heart. With a past life like ours, my brethren—and every man knows his own—pride is surely the maddest state of mind that any of us can allow ourselves in. The first king of Bohemia kept his clouted old shoes ever in his sight, that he might never forget that he had once been a ploughman. And another wise king used to drink out of a coarse cup at table, and excused himself to his guests that he had made the rude thing in his rude potter days. Look with Primislaus and Agathocles

at the hole of the pit out of which you also have been dug; look often enough, deep enough, and long enough, and you will be found passing up through the Valley of Humiliation singing:

> 'With us He dealt not as we sinn'd,
> Nor did requite our ill!'

Another excellent use of the past is, if you are equal to it, to call yourself aloud sometimes, or in writing, some of the names that other people who know your past are certainly calling you. It is a terrible discipline, but it is the terror of the Lord, and He will not let it hurt you too much. I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, says Paul. And, to show Titus, his gospel-son, the way, he said to him: We ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. And John Bunyan calls himself a blackguard, and many other worse names; only he swears that neither with his soldiering nor with his tinkering hands did he ever plash down Beelzebub's orchard. But if you have done that, or anything like that, call yourself aloud by your true name on your knees to-night. William Law testifies, after five-and-twenty years' experience of it, that he never heard of any harm that he had done to any in his house by his habit of singing his secret psalms aloud, and sometimes, ere ever he was aware, bursting out in his penitential prayers.

And, then, how any man with a man's heart in his bosom for a single day can escape being the

chief of sinners, and consequently the humblest of men for all the rest of his life on earth, passes my comprehension! How a spark of pride can live in such a hell as every human heart is would be past belief, did we not know that God avenges sin by more sin; avenges Himself on a wicked and a false heart by more wickedness and more falsehood, all ending in Satanic pride.

Too long as I have kept you in this valley to-night, I dare not let you out of it till I have shared with you a few sentences on evangelical humiliation out of that other so subtle and devout man, Jonathan Edwards. But what special kind of humiliation is evangelical humiliation? you will ask. Hear, then, what this master in Israel says. 'Evangelical humiliation is the sense that a Christian man has of his own utter insufficiency, utter despicableness, and utter odiousness; with an always answerable frame of heart. This humiliation is peculiar to the true saints. It arises from the special influence of the Spirit of God implanting and exercising supernatural and divine principles; and it is accompanied with a sense of the transcendent beauty of divine things. And, thus, God's true saints all more or less see their own odiousness on account of sin, and the exceedingly hateful nature of all sin. The very essence of evangelical humiliation consists in such humility as becomes a man in himself exceeding sinful but now under a dispensation of grace. It consists in a mean esteem of himself, as in himself nothing, and altogether contemptible and odious. This, indeed, is the greatest and the most essential thing in true religion.' And so on through a whole

chapter of beaten gold. To which noble chapter I shall only add that such teaching is as sweet, as strengthening, and as reassuring to the truly Christian heart as it is bitter and hateful to the counterfeit heart.

XXXIX

OLD HONEST

'An honest heart.'—*Our Lord.*

Next tell them of Old Honest, who you found
With his white hairs treading the pilgrim's ground;
Yea, tell them how plain-hearted this man was,
How after his good Lord he bare his cross:
Perhaps with some grey head this may prevail,
With Christ to fall in love, and sin bewail.

YOU would have said that no pilgrim to the Celestial City could possibly have come from a worse place, or a more unlikely place, than was that place from which Christian and Christiana and Matthew and Mercy had come. And yet so it was. For Old Honest, this most excellent and every way most delightful old saint, hailed from a far less likely place than even the City of Destruction. For he came, this rare old soul, of all places in the world, from the Town of Stupidity. So he tells us himself. And, partly to explain to us the humiliating name of his native town, and partly to exhibit himself as a wonder to many, the frank old gentleman goes on to tell us that his birthplace actually lies four degrees further away from the sun than does the far-enough away City of Destruction itself. So that you see this grey-haired saint is all that he always said he was—a living witness to the fact

that his Lord is able to save to the uttermost, and to gather in His Father's elect from the utmost corner of the land. Men are mountains of ice in my country, said Old Honest. I was one of the biggest of those icebergs myself, he said. No man was ever more cold and senseless to divine things than I was, and still sometimes am. It takes the Sun of Righteousness all His might to melt the men of my country. But that He can do it when He rises to do it, and when He puts out His full strength to do it—Look at me! said the genial old soul.

We have to construct this pilgrim's birth and boyhood and youth from his after-character and conversation; and we have no difficulty at all in doing that. For, if the child is the father of the man, then the man must be the outcome of the child, and we can have no hesitation in picturing to ourselves what kind of child and boy and young man dear Old Honest must always have been. He never was a bright child, bright and beaming old man as he is. He was always slow and heavy at his lessons; indeed, I would not like to repeat to you all the bad names that his schoolmasters sometimes in their impatience called the stupid child. Only, this was to be said of him, that dulness of uptake and disappointment of his teachers were the worst things about this poor boy; he was not so ill-behaved as many were who were made more of. When his wits began to waken up after he had come some length he had no little leeway to make up in his learning; but that was the chief drawback to Old Honest's pilgrimage. For one thing, no young

man had a cleaner record behind him than our Honest had; his youthful garments were as unspotted as ever any pilgrim's garments were. Even as a young man he had had the good sense to keep company with one Good-conscience; and that friend of his youth kept true to Old Honest all his days, and even lent him his hand and helped him over the river at last. In his own manly, hearty, blunt, breezy, cheery, and genial way Old Honest is a pilgrim we could ill have spared. Old Honest has a warm place all for himself in every good and honest heart.

'Now, a little before the pilgrims stood an oak, and under it when they came up to it they found an old pilgrim fast asleep; they knew that he was a pilgrim by his clothes and his staff and his girdle. So the guide, Mr. Greatheart, awaked him, and the old gentleman, as he lifted up his eyes, cried out: What's the matter? Who are you? And what is your business here? Come, man, said the guide, be not so hot; here is none but friends! Yet the old man gets up and stands upon his guard, and will know of them what they are.' That weather-beaten oak-tree under which we first meet with Old Honest is an excellent emblem of the man. When he sat down to rest his old bones that day he did not look out for a bank of soft moss or for a bed of fragrant roses; that knotted oak-tree alone had power to draw down under its sturdy trunk this heart of human oak. It was a sight to see those thin grey haffets making a soft pillow of that jutting knee of gnarled and knotty oak, and with his well-worn quarterstaff held close

in a hand all wrinkled skin and scraggy bone. And from that day till he waved his quarterstaff when half over the river and shouted, Grace reigns! there is no pilgrim of them all that affords us half the good humour, sagacity, continual entertainment, and brave encouragement we enjoy through this same old Christian gentleman.

1. Now, let us try to learn two or three lessons to-night from Old Honest, his history, his character, and his conversation. And, to begin with, let all those attend to Old Honest who are slow in the uptake in the things of religion. O fools and slow of heart! exclaimed our Lord at the two travellers to Emmaus. And this was Old Honest to the letter when he first entered on the pilgrimage life; he was slow as sloth itself in the things of the soul. I have often wondered, said Greatheart, that any should come from your place; for your town is worse than is the City of Destruction itself. Yes, answered Honest, we lie more off from the sun, and so are more cold and senseless. And his biographer here annotates on the margin this reflection: 'Stupefied ones are worse than merely carnal.' So they are; though it takes some insight to see that, and some courage to carry that through. Now, to be downright stupid in a man's natural intellects is sad enough, but to be stupid in the intellects of the soul and of the spirit is far more sad. You will often see this if you have any eyes in your head, and are not one of the stupid people yourself. You will see very clever people in the intellects of the head who are yet as stupid as the beasts in the stall in the far nobler intellects of the

heart. You will meet every day with men and women who have received the best college education this city can give them, who are yet stark stupid in everything that belongs to true religion. They are quick to find out the inefficiency of a university chair, or a schoolmaster's desk, but they know no more of what a New Testament pulpit has been set up for than the stupidest sot in the city. The Divine Nature, human nature, sin, grace, redemption, salvation, holiness, heart-corruption, spiritual life, prayer, communion with God, a conversation and a treasure in heaven,—to all these noblest of studies and divinest of exercises they are as a beast before God. When you come upon a man who is a sot in his senses and in his understanding, you expect him to be the same in his spiritual life. But to meet with an expert in science, a classical scholar, an author or a critic in letters, a leader in political or ecclesiastical or municipal life, and yet to discover that he is as stupid as any sot in the things of his own soul, is one of the saddest and most disheartening sights you can see. Much sadder and much more disheartening than to see stairs and streets of people who can neither read nor write. And yet our city is full of such stupid people. You will find as utter spiritual stupidity among the rich and the lettered and the refined of this city as you will find among the ignorant and the vicious and the criminal classes. Is stupidity a sin? asks Thomas in his Forty-Sixth Question. And the great schoolman answers himself, 'Stupidity may come of natural incapacity, in which case it is not a sin. But it may come, on

the other hand, of a man immersing his soul in the things of this world so as to shut out all the things of God and of the world to come, in which case stupidity is a deadly sin.' Now, from all that, you must already see what you are to do in order to escape from your inborn and superinduced stupidity. You are, like Old Honest, to open your gross, cold, senseless heart to the Sun of Righteousness, and you are to take care every day to walk abroad under His beams. You are to emigrate south for your life, as our well-to-do invalids do, to where the sun shines in his strength all the day. You are to choose such a minister, buy and read such a literature, cultivate such an acquaintanceship, and follow out such a new life of habits and practices as shall bring you into the full sunshine, till your heart of ice is melted, and your stupefied soul is filled with spiritual sensibility. For, 'were a man a mountain of ice,' said Old Honest, 'yet if the Sun of Righteousness will arise upon him his frozen heart shall feel a thaw; and thus hath it been with me.' Your poets and your philosophers have no resource against the stupidity that opposes them. 'Even the gods,' they complain, 'fight unvictorious against stupidity.' But your divines and your preachers have hope beside the dullest and the stupidest and even the most imbruted. They point themselves and their slowest and dullest-witted hearers to Old Honest, this rare old saint; and they set up their pulpit with hope and boldness on the very causeway of the town of Stupidity itself.

2. In the second place,—on this fine old pilgrim's birth and boyhood and youth. The apostle says that there is no real difference between one of us

and another; and what he says on that subject must be true. No; there is really no difference compared with the Celestial City whether a pilgrim is born in Stupidity, in Destruction, in Vanity, or in Darkland. At the same time, nature, as well as grace, is of God, and He maketh, when it pleaseth Him, one man to differ in some most important respects from another. You see such differences every day. Some children are naturally, and from their very infancy, false and cruel, mean and greedy; while their brothers and sisters are open and frank and generous. One son in a house is born a vulgar snob, and one daughter a shallow-hearted and shameless little flirt; while another brother is a born gentleman, and another sister a born saint. Some children are tender-hearted, easily melted, and easily moulded; while others in the same family are hard as stone and cold as ice. Sometimes a noble and a truly Christian father will have all his days to weep and pray over a son who is his shame; and then, in the next generation, a grandson will be born to him who will more than recover the lost image of his father's father. And so is it sometimes with father Adam's family. Here and there, in Darkland, in Destruction, and in Stupidity, a child will be born with a surprising likeness to the first Adam in his first estate. That happy child at his best is but the relics and ruins of his first father; at the same time, in him the relics are more abundant and the ruins more easy to trace out. And little Honest was such a well-born child. For, Stupidity and all, there was a real inborn and inbred integrity, uprightness, straightforwardness, and nobleness about this little

and not over-clever man-child. And, on the principle of 'to him that hath shall be given,' there was something like a special providence that hedged this boy about from the beginning. 'I girded thee though thou hast not known Me' was never out of Old Honest's mouth as often as he remembered the days of his own youth and heard other pilgrims mourning over theirs. 'I have surnamed thee though thou hast not known Me,' he would say to himself in his sleep. Slow-witted as he was, no one had been able to cheat young Honest out of his youthful integrity. He had not been led, and he had led no one else, into the paths of the destroyer. He could say about himself all that John Bunyan so boldly and so bluntly said about himself when his enemies charged him with youthful immorality. He left the town in nobody's debt. He left the print of his heels on no man or woman or child when he took his staff in his hand to be a pilgrim. The upward walk of too many pilgrims is less a walk than an escape and a flight. The avenger of men's blood and women's honour has hunted many men deep into heaven's innermost gate. But Old Honest took his time. He walked, if ever pilgrim walked, all the way with an easy mind. He lay down to sleep under the oaks on the wayside, and smiled like a child in his sleep. And, when he was suddenly awaked, instead of crying out for mercy and starting to his heels, he grasped his staff and demanded even of an armed man what business he had to break in on an honest pilgrim's mid-day repose! The King of the Celestial City had a few names even in Stupidity which had not defiled their garments, and

Old Honest was one of them. And all his days his strength was as the strength of ten, because his heart was pure.

3. At the same time, honesty is not holiness; and no one knew that better than did this honest old saint. When any one spoke to Old Honest about his blameless youth, the look in his eye made them keep at arm's-length as he growled out that without holiness no man shall see God! Writing from Aberdeen to John Bell of Hentoun, Samuel Rutherford says: 'I beseech you, in the Lord Jesus, to mind your country above; and now, when old age is come upon you, advise with Christ before you put your foot into the last ship and turn your back on this life. Many are beguiled with this that they are free of scandalous sins. But common honesty will not take men to heaven. Alas! that men should think that ever they met with Christ who had never a sick night or a sore heart for sin. I have known a man turn a key in a door and lock it by.' 'I can,' says John Owen, 'and I do, commend moral virtues and honesty as much as any man ought to do, and I am sure there is no grace where they are not. Yet to make anything to be our holiness that is not derived from Jesus Christ,—I know not what I do more abhor.' 'Are morally honest and sober men qualified for the Lord's Supper?' asks John Flavel. 'No; civility and morality do not make a man a worthy communicant. They are not the wedding garment; but regenerating grace and faith in the smallest measure are.' 'My outside may be honest,' said this honest old pilgrim, 'while all the time my heart is most unholy. My life is open to all

men, but I must hide my heart with Christ in God.'

4. And then this racy-hearted old bachelor was as full of delight in children, and in children's parties, with all their sweetmeats and nuts and games and riddles,—quite as much so—as if he had been their very grandfather himself. Nay, this rosy-hearted old rogue was as inveterate a match-maker as if he had been a mother of the world with a houseful of daughters on her hands and with the sons of the nobility dangling around. It would make you wish you could kiss the two dear old souls, Gaius the innkeeper and Old Honest his guest, if you would only read how they laid their grey heads together to help forward the love-making of Matthew and Mercy. Yes, it would be a great pity, said Old Honest,—thinking with a sigh of his own childless old age,—it would be a great pity if this excellent family of our sainted brother should fail for want of children, and die out like mine. And the two old plotters went together to the mother of the bridegroom, and told her with an aspect of authority that she must put no obstacle in her son's way, but take Mercy as soon as convenient into a closer relation to herself. And Gaius said that he for his part would give the marriage supper. And I shall make no will, said Honest, but hand all I have over to Matthew my son. This is the way, said Old Honest; and he skipped and smiled and kissed the cheek of the aged mother and said, Then thy two children shall preserve thee and thy husband a posterity in the earth! Then he turned to the boys and he said, Matthew, be thou like Matthew

the publican, not in vice, but in virtue. Samuel, he said, be thou like Samuel the prophet, a man of faith and of prayer. Joseph, said he, be thou like Joseph in Potiphar's house, chaste, and one that flees from temptation. And James, be thou like James the Just, and like James the brother of our Lord. Mercy, he said, is thy name, and by mercy shalt thou be sustained and carried through all thy difficulties that shall assault thee in the way, till thou shalt come thither where thou shalt look the Fountain of Mercy in the face with comfort. And all this while the guide, Mr. Great-heart, was very much pleased, and smiled upon the nimble old gentleman.

5. 'Then it came to pass a while after that there was a post in the town that inquired for Mr. Honest. So he came to his house where he was, and delivered to his hands these lines, Thou art commanded to be ready against this day seven night, to present thyself before thy Lord at His Father's house. And for a token that my message is true, all thy daughters of music shall be brought low. Then Mr. Honest called for his friends and said unto them, I die, but shall make no will. As for my honesty, it shall go with me: let him that comes after me be told of this. When the day that he was to be gone was come he addressed himself to go over the river. Now, the river at that time overflowed the banks at some places. But Mr. Honest in his lifetime had spoken to one Good-conscience to meet him there, the which he also did, and lent him his hand, and so helped him over. The last words of Mr. Honest were,

Grace reigns! So he left the world.' Look at that picture and now look at this: 'They then addressed themselves to the water, and, entering, Christian began to sink, and crying out to his good friend Hopeful, he said, I sink in deep waves, the billows go over my head, all His waters go over me. Then said the other, Be of good cheer, my brother, I feel the bottom, and it is good. Then said Christian, Ah, my friend, the sorrows of death have compassed me about; I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey. And with that a great horror and darkness fell upon Christian, so that he could not see before him; and all the words that he spoke still tended to discover that he had horror of mind lest he should die in that river and never obtain entrance in at the gate. Here also, as they that stood by perceived, he was much in the troublesome thoughts of the sins that he had committed, both since and before he began to be a pilgrim. 'Twas also observed that he was troubled with apparitions of hobgoblins and evil spirits. Hopeful, therefore, had much ado to keep his brother's head above water. Yea, sometimes he would be quite gone down, and then ere a while he would rise up again half dead.' My brethren, all my brethren, be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. Thou, O God, wast a God that forgavest them, but Thou tookest vengeance on their inventions.

XL

MR. FEARING

'Happy is the man that feareth alway.'—*Solomon.*

FOR humour, for pathos, for tenderness, for acute and sympathetic insight at once into nature and grace, for absolutely artless literary skill, and for the sweetest, most musical, and most exquisite English, show me another passage in our whole literature to compare with John Bunyan's portrait of Mr. Fearing. You cannot do it. I defy you to do it. Spenser, who, like John Bunyan, wrote an elaborate allegory, says: It is not in me. Take all Mr. Fearing's features together, and even Shakespeare himself has no such heart-touching and heart-comforting character. Addison may have some of the humour and Lamb some of the tenderness; but, then, they have not the religion. Scott has the insight into nature, but he has no eye at all for grace; while Thackeray, who, in some respects, comes nearest to John Bunyan of them all, would be the foremost to confess that he is not worthy to touch the shoe-latchet of the Bedford tinker. As Dr. Duncan said in his class one day when telling us to read Augustine's Autobiography and Halyburton's:—'But,' he said,

'be prepared for this, that the tinker beats them all!' 'Methinks,' says Browning, 'in this God speaks, no tinker hath such powers.'

Now, as they walked along together, the guide asked the old gentleman if he knew one Mr. Fearing that came on pilgrimage out of his parts. 'Yes,' said Mr. Honest, 'very well. He was a man that had the root of the matter in him; but he was one of the most troublesome pilgrims that ever I met with in all my days.' 'I perceive you knew him,' said the guide, 'for you have given a very right character of him.' 'Knew him!' exclaimed Honest, 'I was a great companion of his; I was with him most an end. When he first began to think of what would come upon us hereafter, I was with him.' 'And I was his guide,' said Great-heart, 'from my Master's house to the gates of the Celestial City.' 'Then,' said Mr. Honest, 'it seems he was well at last.' 'Yes, yes,' answered the guide, 'I never had any doubt about him; he was a man of a choice spirit, only he was always kept very low, and that made his life so burdensome to himself and so troublesome to others. He was, above many, tender of sin; he was so afraid of doing injuries to others that he would often deny himself of that which was lawful because he would not offend.' 'But what,' asked Honest, 'should be the reason that such a good man should be all his days so much in the dark?' 'There are two sorts of reasons for it,' said the guide; 'one is, the wise God will have it so: some must pipe and some must weep. Now, Mr. Fearing was one that played upon this base. He

and his fellows sound the sackbut, whose notes are more doleful than the notes of other music are. Though, indeed, some say that the base is the ground of music. And, for my part, I care not at all for that profession that begins not with heaviness of mind. The first string that the musician usually touches is the base when he intends to put all in tune. God also plays upon this string first when He sets the soul in tune for Himself. Only, here was the imperfection of Mr. Fearing, that he could play upon no other music but this till toward his latter end.'

1. Take Mr. Fearing, then, to begin with, at the Slough of Despond. Christian and Pliable, they being heedless, did both fall into that bog. But Mr. Fearing, whatever faults you may think he had—and faults, too, that you think you could mend in him—at any rate, he was never heedless. Everybody has his fault to find with poor Mr. Fearing. Everybody blames poor Mr. Fearing. Everybody can improve upon poor Mr. Fearing. But I will say again for Mr. Fearing that he was never heedless. Had Peter been on the road at that period he would have stood up for Mr. Fearing, and would have taken his judges and would have said to them, with some scorn—Go to, and pass the time of your sojourning here with something of the same silence and the same fear! Christian's excuse for falling into the Slough was that fear so followed him that he fled the next way, and so fell in. But Mr. Fearing had no such fear behind him in his city as Christian had in his. All Mr. Fearing's fears were within himself. If you can

take up the distinction between actual and indwelling sin, between guilt and corruption, you have already in that the whole key to Mr. Fearing. He was blamed and counselled and corrected and pitied and patronised by every morning-cloud and early-dew neophyte, while all the time he lived far down from the strife of tongues where the root of the matter strikes its deep roots still deeper every day. 'It took him a whole month,' tells Great-heart, 'to face the Slough. But he would not go back neither. Till, one sunshiny morning, nobody ever knew how, he ventured, and so got over. But the fact of the matter is,' said the shrewd-headed guide, 'Mr. Fearing had, I think, a slough of despond in his own mind; and a slough that he carried everywhere with him.' Yes, that was it. Great-heart in that has hit the nail on the head. With one happy stroke he has given us the whole secret of poor Mr. Fearing's life-long trouble. Just so; it was the slough in himself that so kept poor Mr. Fearing back. This poor pilgrim, who had so little to fear in his past life, had yet so much scum and filth, spume and mire in his present heart, that how to get on the other side of that cost him not a month's roaring only, but all the months and all the years till he went over the River not much above wet-shod. And, till then, not twenty million cart-loads of wholesome instructions, nor any number of good and substantial steps, would lift poor Mr. Fearing over the ditch that ran so deep and so foul continually within himself. 'Yes, he had, I think, a slough of despond in his mind, a slough that he carried everywhere with him, or else he never

could have been the man he was.' I, for one, thank the great-hearted guide for that fine sentence.

2. It was a sight to see poor Mr. Fearing at the wicket gate. 'Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' He read the inscription over the gate a thousand times, but every time he read it his slough-filled heart said to him, Yes, but that is not for such as you. Pilgrim after pilgrim came up the way, read the writing, knocked, and was taken in; but still Mr. Fearing stood back, shaking and shrinking. At last he ventured to take hold of the hammer that hung on the gate and gave with it a small rap such as a mouse might make. But small as the sound was, the Gatekeeper had had his eye on his man all the time out of his watch-window; and before Mr. Fearing had time to turn and run, Goodwill had him by the collar. But that sudden assault only made Mr. Fearing sink to the earth, faint and half-dead. 'Peace be to thee, O trembling man!' said Goodwill. 'Come in, and welcome!' When he did venture in, Mr. Fearing's face was as white as a sheet. You would have said that an officer had caught a thief if you had seen poor Mr. Fearing hiding his face, and the Gatekeeper hauling him in. And not all the entertainment for which the Gate was famous, nor all the encouragement that Goodwill was able to speak, could make terrified Mr. Fearing for once to smile. A more hard-to-entertain pilgrim, all the Gate declared when he had gone, they had never had in their hospitable house.

3. 'So he came,' said the guide, 'till he came to our House; but as he behaved himself at the Gate, so he did at my Master the Interpreter's door. He

lay about in the cold a good while before he would adventure to call. Yet he would not go back neither. And the nights were cold and long then. At last I think I looked out of the window, and perceiving a man to be up and down about the door, I went out to him, and asked what he was; but, poor man, the water stood in his eyes. So I perceived what he wanted. I went in, therefore, and told it in the house, and we showed the thing to our Lord. So He sent me out again to entreat him to come in, but I dare say I had hard work to do it. At last he came in, and I will say that for my Lord, He carried it wonderful lovingly to Mr. Fearing. There were but a few good bits at the table, but some of it was laid upon his trencher.' In this way the guide tells us his first introduction to Mr. Fearing, and how Mr. Fearing behaved himself in the Interpreter's House. For instance, in the parlour full of dust, when the Interpreter said that the dust is original sin and inward corruption, you would have thought that the Interpreter had stabbed poor Mr. Fearing to the heart, so did he break out and weep. Before the damsel could come with the pitcher, Mr. Fearing's eyes alone would have laid the dust, they were such a fountain of tears. When he saw Passion and Patience, each one in his chair—'I am that child in rags,' said Mr. Fearing; 'I have already received all my good things!' Also, at the wall where the fire burned because oil was poured into it from the other side, he perversely turned that fire also against himself. And when they came to the man in the iron cage, you could not have told whether the miserable man inside

the cage or the miserable man outside of it sighed the loudest. And so on, through all the significant rooms. The spider-room overwhelmed him altogether, till his sobs and the beating of his breast were heard all over the house. The robin also when gobbling up spiders he made an emblem of himself, and the tree that was rotten at the heart, —till the Interpreter's patience with this so perverse pilgrim was fairly worn out. So the Interpreter shut up his significant rooms, and had this so troublesome pilgrim into his own chamber, and there carried it so tenderly to Mr. Fearing that at last he did seem to have taken some little heart of grace. 'And then we,' said Great-heart, 'set forward, and I went before him; but the man was of few words, only he would often sigh aloud.'

4. 'Dumpish at the House Beautiful' is his biographer's not very respectful comment on the margin of the history. There were too many merry-hearted damsels running up and down that house for Mr. Fearing. He could not lift his eyes but one of those too-tripping maidens was looking at him. He could not stir a foot but he suddenly ran against a talking and laughing bevy of them. There was one thing he loved above everything, and that was to overhear the talk that went on at that season in that house about the City above, and about the King of that City, and about His wonderful ways with pilgrims, and the entertainment they all got who entered that City. But to get a word out of Mr. Fearing upon any of these subjects,—all the king's horses could not have dragged it out of him. Only, the screen was always seen to move

during such conversations, till it soon came to be known to all the house who was behind the screen. And the talkers only talked a little louder as the screen moved, and took up, with a smile to one another, another and a yet more comforting topic.

The Rarity Rooms also were more to Mr. Fearing than his necessary food. He would be up in the morning and waiting at the doors of those rooms before the keepers had come with their keys. And they had to tell him that the candles were to be put out at night before he would go away. He was always reading, as if he had never read it before, the pedigree of the Lord of the Hill. Moses' rod, Shamgar's goad, David's sling and stone, and what not—he laughed and danced and sang like a child around these ancient tables. The armoury-room also held him, where were the swords, and shields, and helmets, and breast-plates, and shoes that would not wear out. You would have thought you had your man all right as long as you had him alone among these old relics; but, let supper be ready, and the house gathered, and Mr. Fearing was as dumpish as ever. Eat he would not, drink he would not, nor would he sit at the same table with those who ate and drank with such gladness. I remembered Mr. Fearing at the House Beautiful when I was present at a communion season some time back in Ross-shire. The church was half full of Mr. Fearing's close kindred that communion morning. For, all that the minister himself could do, and all that the assisting minister could do—no! to the table those self-examined, self-condemned, fear-filled souls would not come.

The two ministers, like Mr. Great-heart's Master, carried it wonderful lovingly with those poor saints that day; but those who are in deed, and not in name only, passing the time of their sojourning here in fear—they cannot all at once be lifted above all their fears, even by the ablest action sermons, or by the most wise and tender table-addresses. And, truth to tell, though you will rebuke me all the way home to-night for saying it, my heart sat somewhat nearer to those old people who were perhaps a little too dumpish in their repentance and their faith and their hope that morning, than it did to those who took to the table with a light heart. I know all your flippant cant about gospel liberty and against Highland introspection, as you call it—as well as all your habitual neglect of a close and deep self-examination, as Paul called it; but I tell you all to-night that it would be the salvation of your soul if you too worked your way up to every returning Lord's table with much more fear and much more trembling. Let a man examine himself, Saxon as well as Celt, in Edinburgh as well as in Ross-shire, and so let him eat of that flesh and drink of that blood. 'These pills,' said Mr. Skill, 'are to be taken three at a time fasting in half a quarter of a pint of the tears of repentance; these pills are good to prevent diseases, as well as to cure when one is sick. Yea, I dare say it, and stand to it, that if a man will but use this physic as he should, it will make him live for ever. But thou must give these pills no other way but as I have prescribed; for, if you do, they will do no good.' 'Then he and I set forward,'

said the guide, 'and I went before; but my man was of but few words, only he would often sigh aloud.'

5. As to the Hill Difficulty, that was no stick at all to Mr. Fearing; and as for the lions, he pulled their whiskers and snapped his fingers in their dumfoundered faces. For you must know that Mr. Fearing's trouble was not about such things as these at all; his only fear was about his acceptance at last. He beat Mr. Great-heart himself at getting down into the Valley of Humiliation, till the guide was fain to confess that he went down as well as he ever saw man go down in all his life. This pilgrim cared not how mean he was, so he might be but happy at last. That is the reason why so many of God's best saints take so kindly and so quietly to things that drive other men mad. You wonder sometimes when you see an innocent man sit down quietly under accusations and insults and injuries that you spend all the rest of your life resenting and repaying. And that is the reason also that so many of God's best saints in other ages and other communions used to pursue evangelical humility and ascetic poverty and seclusion till they obliterated themselves out of all human remembrance, and buried themselves in retreats of silence and of prayer. Yes, you are quite right. A garment of sackcloth may cover an unsanctified heart; and the fathers of the desert did not all escape the depths of Satan and the plague of their own heart. Quite true. A contrite heart may be carried about an applauding city in a coach and six; and a crucified heart may be

clothed in purple and fine linen, and may fare sumptuously every day. A saint of God will sometimes sit on a throne with a more weaned mind than that with which Elijah or the Baptist will macerate themselves in the wilderness. Every man who is really set on heaven must find his own way thither; and he who is really intent on his own way thither will neither have the time nor the heart to throw stones at his brother who thinks he has discovered his own best way. All the pilgrims who got to the City at last did not get down Difficulty and through Humiliation so well as Mr. Fearing did; nor was it absolutely necessary that they should. It was not to lay down an iron-fast rule for others, but it was only to amuse the way with his account of Mr. Fearing, that the guide went on to say: 'Yes, I think there was a kind of sympathy betwixt that valley and my man. For I never saw him better in all his pilgrimage than when he was in that valley. For here he would lie down, embrace the ground, and kiss the very flowers that grew in this valley. He would now be up every morning by break of day, tracing and walking to and fro in that valley.'

6. Now, do you think you could guess how Mr. Fearing conducted himself in Vanity Fair? Your guess is important to us and to you to-night; for it will show whether or no John Bunyan and Mr. Great-heart have spent their strength for nought and in vain on you. It will show whether or no you have got inside of Mr. Fearing with all that has been said; and thus, inside of yourself. Guess, then. How did Mr. Fearing do in Vanity Fair, do

you think? To give you a clue, recollect that he was the timidest of souls. And remember how you have often been afraid to look at things in a shop window lest the shopkeeper should come out and hold you to the thing you were looking at. Remember also that you are the lifelong owners of some things just because they were thrown at your head. Remember how you sauntered into a sale on one occasion, and, out of sheer idleness and pure fun, made a bid, and to your consternation the encumbrance was knocked down to your name; and it fills up your house to-day till you would give ten times its value to some one to take it away for ever out of your sight. Well, what was it that those who were so shamelessly and so pesteringly cadging about places, and titles, and preferments, and wives, and gold, and silver, and such like—what was it they prevailed on this poor stupid countryman to cheapen and buy? Do you guess, or do you give it up? Well, Great-heart himself was again and again almost taken in; and would have been had not Mr. Fearing been beside him. But Mr. Fearing looked at all the jugglers, and cheats, and knaves, and apes, and fools as if he would have bitten a firebrand. 'I thought he would have fought with all the men of the fair; I feared there we should have both been knock'd o' th' head, so hot was he against their fooleries.' And then—for Great-heart was a bit of a philosopher, and liked to entertain and while the way with tracing things up to their causes—'it was all,' he said, 'because Mr. Fearing was so tender of sin. He was above many tender of sin. He was so

afraid, not for himself only, but of doing injury to others, that he would deny himself the purchase and possession and enjoyment even of that which was lawful, because he would not offend.' 'All this while,' says Bunyan himself, in the eighty-second paragraph of *Grace Abounding*, 'as to the act of sinning I was never more tender than now. I durst not take a pin or a stick, though but so big as a straw, for my conscience now was sore and would smart at every touch. I could not now tell how to speak my words for fear I should misplace them.' 'The highest flames,' says Jeremy Taylor in his *Life of Christ*, 'are the most tremulous.'

7. 'But when he was come at the river where was no bridge, there, again, Mr. Fearing was in a heavy case. Now, he said, he should be drowned for ever, and so never see that Face with comfort that he had come so many miles to behold. And here also I took notice of what was very remarkable; the water of that river was lower at this time than ever I saw it in all my life, so he went over at last not much above wet-shod.' Then said Christiana, 'This relation of Mr. Fearing has done me good. I thought nobody had been like me, but I see there was some semblance betwixt this good man and I, only we differed in two things. His troubles were so great that they broke out, but mine I kept within. His also lay so hard upon him that he could not knock at the houses provided for entertainment, but my trouble was always such that it made me knock the louder.' 'If I might also speak my heart,' said Mercy, 'I must say that something of him has also dwelt in me. For I

nave ever been more afraid of the lake, and the loss of a place in Paradise, than I have been of the loss of other things. Oh! thought I, may I have the happiness to have a habitation there: 'tis enough though I part with all the world to win it.' Then said Matthew, 'Fear was one thing that made me think that I was far from having that within me that accompanies salvation; but if it was so with such a good man as he, why may it not also go well with me?' 'No fears, no grace,' said James. 'Though there is not always grace where there is fear of hell; yet, to be sure, there is no grace where there is no fear of God.' 'Well said, James,' said Great-heart; 'thou hast hit the mark, for the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom; and, to be sure, they that want the beginning have neither middle nor end.' But we shall here conclude our discourse of Mr. Fearing after we have sent after him this farewell:—

'It is because
Then thou dids' fear, that now thou dost not fear.
Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so
For thee the bitterness of death is past.
Also, because already in thy soul
The judgment is begun. That day of doom,
One and the same for this collected world—
That solemn consummation for all flesh,
Is, in the case of each, anticipate
Upon his death; and, as the last great day
In the particular judgment is rehearsed,
So now, too, ere thou comest to the Throne,
A presage falls upon thee, as a ray
Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy lot.
That calm and joy uprising in thy soul
Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,
And heaven begun.'

XLI

FEEBLE-MIND

'Comfort the feeble-minded.'—*Paul.*

FEEBLE-MIND shall first tell you his own story in his own words, and then I shall perhaps venture a few observations upon his history and his character.

'I am but a sickly man, as you see,' said Feeble-mind to Great-heart, 'and because Death did usually knock once a day at my door, I thought I should never be well at home. So I betook myself to a pilgrim's life, and have travelled hither from the town of Uncertain, where I and my father were born. I am a man of no strength at all of body, nor yet of mind; but would, if I could, though I can but crawl, spend my life in the pilgrim's way. When I came at the gate that is at the head of the way, the Lord of that place did entertain me freely. Neither objected he against my weakly looks, nor against my feeble mind; but gave me such things as were necessary for my journey, and bade me hope to the end. When I came to the house of the Interpreter I received much kindness there; and, because the Hill Difficulty was judged too hard for me, I was carried up that hill by one of his servants. Indeed I have found much relief from

pilgrims, though none were willing to go so softly as I am forced to do. Yet, still, as they came on, they bid me be of good cheer, and said that it was the will of their Lord that comfort should be given to the feeble-minded, and so went on their own pace. I look for brunts by the way; but this I have resolved on, to wit, to run when I can, to go when I cannot run, and to creep when I cannot go. As to the main, I thank Him that loves me, I am fixed. My way is before me, my mind is beyond the river that has no bridge, though I am, as you see, but of a feeble mind.'

Then said old Mr. Honest, 'Have you not some time ago been acquainted with one Mr. Fearing, a pilgrim?' Acquainted with him! yes. He came from the town of Stupidity, which lies four degrees to the northward of the City of Destruction, and as many off where I was born. Yet we were well acquainted; for, indeed, he was mine uncle, my father's brother. He and I have been much of a temper; he was a little shorter than I, but yet we were much of a complexion.' 'I perceive that you know him,' said Mr. Honest, 'and I am apt to believe also that you were related one to another; for you have his whitely look, a cast like his with your eye, and your speech is much alike.'

'Alas!' Feeble-mind went on, 'I want a suitable companion. You are all lusty and strong, but I, as you see, am weak. I choose therefore rather to come behind, lest, by reason of my many infirmities, I should be both a burden to myself and to you. I am, as I said, a man of a weak and feeble mind, and shall be offended and made weak at that which

others can bear. I shall like no laughing; I shall like no gay attire; I shall like no unprofitable questions. Nay, I am so weak a man as to be offended with what others have a liberty to do. I do not yet know all the truth. I am a very ignorant Christian man. Sometimes, if I hear some rejoice in the Lord, it troubles me because I cannot do so too. It is with me as with a weak man among the strong, or as with a sickly man among the healthy, or as a lamp despised.' 'But, brother,' said Great-heart, 'I have it in commission to comfort the feeble-minded and to support the weak.' Thus therefore, they went on—Mr. Great-heart and Mr. Honest went before; Christiana and her children went next; and Mr. Feeble-mind and Mr. Ready-to-halt came behind with his crutches.

1. In the first place, a single word as to Feeble-mind's family tree.

Thackeray says that *The Peerage* is the Family Bible of every true-born Englishman. Every genuine Englishman, he tells us, teaches that sacred book diligently to his children. He talks out of it to them when he sits in the house and when he walks by the way. He binds it upon his children's hands, and it is as a frontlet between their eyes. He writes its names upon the door-posts of his house, and makes pictures out of it upon his gates. Now, John Bunyan was a born Englishman in his liking for a family tree. He had no such tree himself—scarcely so much as a bramble bush; but, all the same, let the tinker take his pen in hand, and the pedigrees and genealogies of all his pilgrims are sure to be set forth as much as if they were to form

the certificates that those pilgrims were to hand in at the gate.

Feeble-mind, then, was of an old, a well-rooted, and a wide-spread race. The county of Indecision was full of that ancient stock. They had intermarried in-and-in also till their small stature, their whitely look, the droop of their eye, and their weak leaky speech all made them to be easily recognised wherever they went. It was Feeble-mind's salvation that Death had knocked at his door every day from his youth up. He was feeble in body as well as in mind; only the feebleness of his body had put a certain strength into his mind; the only strength he ever showed, indeed, was the strength that had its roots in a weak constitution at which sickness and death struck their dissolving blows every day. To escape death, both the first and the second death, any man with a particle of strength left would run with all his might; and Feeble-mind had strength enough somewhere among his weak joints to make him say, 'But this I have resolved on, to wit, to run when I can, to go when I cannot run, and to creep when I cannot go. As to the main, I am fixed!'

2. At the Wicket Gate pilgrim Feeble-mind met with nothing but the kindest and the most condescending entertainment. It was the gatekeeper's way to become all things to all men. The gatekeeper's nature was all in his name; for he was all Goodwill together. No kind of pilgrim ever came wrong to Goodwill. He never found fault with any. Only let them knock and come in and he will see to all the rest. The way is full of all the gatekeeper's kind words and still kinder actions. Every several pilgrim has

his wager with all the rest that no one ever got such kindness at the gate as he got. And even Feeble-mind gave the gatekeeper this praise—'The Lord of the place,' he said, 'did entertain me freely. Neither objected he against my weakly looks nor against my feeble mind. But he gave me such things as were necessary for my journey, and bade me hope to the end.' All things considered, that is perhaps the best praise that Goodwill and his house ever earned. For, to receive and to secure Feeble-mind as a pilgrim—to make it impossible for Feeble-mind to entertain a scruple or a suspicion that was not removed beforehand—to make it impossible for Feeble-mind to find in all the house and in all its grounds so much as a straw over which he could stumble—that was extraordinary attention, kindness, and condescension in Goodwill and all his good-willed house. 'Go on, go on, dear Mr. Feeble mind,' said Goodwill giving his hand to Mr. Fearing's nephew, 'go on: keep your feeble mind open to the truth, and still hope to the end!'

3. 'As to the Interpreter's House, I received much kindness there.' That is all. But in that short speech I think there must lie hid no little shame and remorse. No words could possibly be a severer condemnation of Feeble-mind than his own two or three so irrelevant words about the Interpreter's house. No doubt at all, Feeble-mind received kindness there; but that is not the point. That noble house was not built at such cost, and fitted up, and kept open all the year round, and filled with fresh furniture from year to year, merely that those who passed through its significant rooms

might report that they had received no rudeness at the hands of the Interpreter. 'Come,' said the Interpreter to Feeble-mind, and I will show thee what will be profitable to thee.' So he commanded his man to light the candle and bid Feeble-mind follow him. But it was all to no use. Feeble-mind had neither the taste nor the capacity for the significant rooms. Nay, as one after another of those rich rooms was opened to him, Feeble-mind took a positive dislike to them. Nothing interested him; nothing instructed him. But many things stumbled and angered him. The parlour full of dust, and how the dust was raised and laid; Passion and Patience; the man in the iron cage; the spider-room; the muck-rake room; the robin with its red breast and its pretty note, and yet with its coarse food; the tree, green outside but rotten at the heart,—all the thanks the Interpreter took that day for all that from Feeble-mind was in such speeches as these: You make me lose my head. I do not know where I am. I did not leave the town of Uncertain to be confused and perplexed in my mind with sights and sounds like these. Let me out at the door I came in at, and I shall go back to the gate. Goodwill had none of these unhappy rooms in his sweet house!' Nothing could exceed the kindness of the Interpreter himself; but his house was full of annoyances and offences and obstructions to Mr. Feeble-mind. He did not like the Interpreter's house, and he got out of it as fast as he could, with his mind as feeble as when he entered it; and, what was worse, with his temper not a little ruffled.

And we see this very same intellectual laziness, this very same downright dislike at divine truth, in our own people every day. There are in every congregation people who take up their lodgings at the gate and refuse to go one step farther on the way. A visit to the Interpreter's House always upsets them. It turns their empty head. They do not know where they are. They will not give what mind they have to divine truth, all you can do to draw them on to it, till they die as feeble-minded, as ignorant, and as inexperienced as they were born. They never read a religious book that has any brain or heart in it. The feeble *Lives* of feeble-minded Christians, written by feeble-minded authors, and published by feeble-minded publishers,—we all know the spoon-meat that multitudes of our people go down to their second childhood upon. Jonathan Edwards—a name they never hear at home, but one of the most masculine and seraphic of interpreters—has a noble discourse on The Importance and Advantage of a thorough Knowledge of Divine Truth. 'Consider yourselves,' he says, 'as scholars or disciples put into the school of Christ, and therefore be diligent to make proficiency in Christian knowledge. Content not yourselves with this, that you have been taught your Catechism in your childhood, and that you know as much of the principles of religion as is necessary to salvation. Let not your teachers have cause to complain that while they spend and are spent to impart knowledge to you, you take little pains to learn. Be assiduous in reading the Holy Scriptures. And when you read, observe what you read. Observe how things

come in. Compare one scripture with another. Procure and diligently use other books which may help you to grow in this knowledge. There are many excellent books extant which might greatly forward you in this knowledge. There is a great defect in many, that through a lothness to be at a little expense, they provide themselves with no more helps of this nature.' Weighty, wise, and lamentably true words.

'Mundanus,' says William Law, 'is a man of excellent parts, and clear apprehension. He is well advanced in age, and has made a great figure in business. He has aimed at the greatest perfection in everything. The only thing which has not fallen under his improvement, nor received any benefit from his judicious mind, is his devotion; this is just in the same poor state it was when he was six years of age, and the old man prays now in that little form of words which his mother used to hear him repeat night and morning. This Mundanus that hardly ever saw the poorest utensil without considering how it might be made or used to better advantage, has gone on all his life long praying in the same manner as when he was a child; without ever considering how much better or oftener he might pray; without considering how improvable the spirit of devotion is, how many helps a wise and reasonable man may call to his assistance, and how necessary it is that our prayers should be enlarged, varied, and suited to the particular state and condition of our lives. How poor and pitiable is the conduct of this man of sense, who has so much judgment and understanding in everything but that

which is the whole wisdom of man!' How true to every syllable is that! How simple-looking, and yet how manly, and able, and noble! We close our young men's session with Law and Butler to-night, and I cannot believe that our session with those two giants has left one feeble mind in the two classes; they were all weeded out after the first fortnight of the session; though, after all is done, there are still plenty left both among old and young in the congregation. Even Homer sometimes nods; and I cannot but think that John Bunyan has made a slip in saying that Feeble-mind enjoyed the Interpreter's House. At any rate, I wish I could say as much about all the feeble minds known to me.

4. The Hill Difficulty, which might have helped to make a man of Feeble-mind, saw a laughable, if it had not been such a lamentable, spectacle. For it saw this poor creature hanging as limp as wet linen on the back of one of the Interpreter's sweating servants. Your little boy will explain the parable to you. Shall I do this? or, shall I rather do that? asks Feeble-mind at every stop. Would it be right? or, would it be wrong? Shall I read that book? Shall I go to that ball? Shall I marry that man? Tell me what to do. Give me your hand. Take me up upon your back, and carry me over this difficult hill. 'I was carried up that,' says poor Feeble-mind, 'by one of his servants.'

5. 'The one calamity of Mr. Feeble-mind's history,' says our ablest commentator on Bunyan, 'was the finest mercy of his history.' That one calamity was his falling into Giant Slay-good's hands, and his finest mercy was his rescue by Great-heart, and his

consequent companionship with his deliverer, with Mr. Honest, and with Christiana and her party till they came to the river. You constantly see the same thing in the life of the Church and of the Christian Family. Some calamity throws a weak, ignorant, and immoral creature into close contact with a minister or an elder or a Christian visitor, who not only relieves him from his present distress, but continues to keep his eye upon his new acquaintance, introduces him to wise and good friends, invites him to his house, gives him books to read, and keeps him under good influences, till, of a weak, feeble, and sometimes vicious character, he is made a Christian man, till he is able for himself to say, It was good for me to be afflicted; the one calamity of my history has been my best mercy!

6. Feeble-mind, I am ashamed to have to admit, behaved himself in a perfectly scandalous manner at the house of Gaius mine host. He went beyond all bounds during those eventful weeks. Those weeks were one long temptation to Feeble-mind; and he went down in a pitiful way before his temptation. Two marriages and two honeymoons, with suppers and dances every night, made the old hostelry like very Pandemonium itself to poor Feeble-mind. He would have had Matthew's and James's marriages conducted next door to a funeral. Because he would not eat flesh himself, he protested against Gaius killing a sheep. 'Man,' said old Honest, almost laying his quarterstaff over Feeble-mind's shoulders—'Man, dost thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more

cakes and ale?' 'I shall like no laughing,' said Feeble-mind; 'I shall like no gay attire; I shall like no unprofitable questions.' I think it took some self-conceit to refuse to sit at table beside Christiana because of her gay attire. And I hope Mercy did not give up dressing well, even after she was married, to please that weak-minded old churl. And as to unprofitable questions—we are all tempted to think that question unprofitable which our incapacity or our ignorance keeps us silent upon at table. We think that topic both ill-timed and impertinent and unsafe to which we are not invited to contribute anything. 'I am a very ignorant man,' he went on to say; and, if that was said in any humility, Feeble-mind never said a truer word. 'It is with me as it is with a weak man among the strong, or as with a sick man among the healthy, or as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.' All which only brought Great-heart out in his very best colours. 'But, brother,' said the guide, 'I have it in commission to comfort the feeble-minded, and to support the weak. You must needs go along with us; we will wait for you, we will lend you our help, we will deny ourselves of some things, both opinionative and practical, for your sake; we will not enter into doubtful disputations before you; we will be made all things to you rather than that you shall be left behind.'

7. The first thing that did Mr. Feeble-mind any real good was his being made military guard over the women and the children while the men went out to demolish Doubting Castle. *Quis custodiet?*

you will smile and say when you hear that. Who shall protect the protector? you will say. But wait a little. Great-heart knew his business. For not only did Feeble-mind rise to the occasion when he was put to it; but, more than that, he was the soul of good company at supper-time that night. 'Jocund and merry' are the very words. Yes; give your feeble and fault-finding folk something to do. Send them to teach a class. Send them down into a mission district. Lay a sense of responsibility upon them. Leave them to deal with this and that emergency themselves. Cease carrying them on your back, and lay weak and evil and self-willed people on their back. Let them feel that they are of some real use. As Matthew Arnold says, Let the critic but try practice, and you will make a new man of him. As Great-heart made of Feeble-mind by making him mount guard over the Celestial caravan while the fighting men were all up at Doubting Castle.

8. 'Mark this,' says Mr. Feeble-mind's biographer on the early margin of his history, lest we should be tempted to forget the good parts of this troublesome and provoking pilgrim—'Mark this.' This, namely, which Feeble-mind says to his guide. 'As to the main, I thank Him that loves me, I am fixed. My way is before me, my mind is beyond the river that has no bridge, though I am, as you see, but of a feeble mind.' And that leads us with returning regard and love to turn to the end of his history, where we read: 'After this Mr. Feeble-mind had tidings brought him that the post sounded his horn at his chamber door.

Then he came in and told him, saying, I am come to tell thee that thy Master hath need of thee, and that in very little time thou must behold His face in brightness. Then Mr. Feeble-mind called for his friends, and told them what errand had been brought to him, and what token he had received of the truth of the message. As for my feeble mind, he said, that I shall leave behind me, for I shall have no need of that in the place whither I go. Nor is it worth bestowing upon the poorest pilgrim. Wherefore, when I am gone, I desire that you would bury it in a dung-hill. This done, and the day being come in which he was about to depart, he entered the river as the rest. His last words were, Hold out, faith and patience! So he went over to the other side.

XLII

GREAT-HEART

'—when thou shalt enlarge my heart.'—*David.*

N Sabbath, the 12th December 1886, I heard the late Canon Liddon preach a sermon in St. Paul's Cathedral, in which he classed Oliver Cromwell with Alexander the Sixth and with Richard the Third. I had taken my estimate of the great Protector's character largely from Carlyle's famous book, and you can judge with what feelings I heard the canon's comparison. And, besides, I had been wont to think of the Protector as having entered largely into John Bunyan's portrait of Great-heart, the pilgrim guide. And the researches and the judgments of Dr. Gardiner have only gone to convince me, the eloquent canon notwithstanding, that Bunyan could not have chosen a better contemporary groundwork for his Great-heart than just the great Puritan soldier. Cromwell's 'mental struggles before his conversion,' his life-long 'searchings of heart,' his 'utter absence of vindictiveness,' his unequalled capacity for 'seeing into the heart of a situation,' and his own 'all-embracing hospitality of heart'—all have gone to reassure me that my first guess as to Bunyan's employment of

the Protector's matchless personality and services had not been so far astray. And the oftener I read the noble history of Great-heart, the better I seem to hear, beating behind his fine figure, by far the greatest heart that ever ruled over the realm of England.

1. The first time that we catch a glimpse of Great-heart's weather-beaten and sword-seamed face is when he is taking a stolen look out of the window at Mr. Fearing, who is conducting himself more like a chicken than a man around the Interpreter's door. And from that moment till Mr. Fearing shouted 'Grace reigns!' as he cleared the last river, never sportsman surely stalked a startled deer so patiently and so skilfully and so successfully as Great-heart circumvented that chicken-hearted pilgrim. 'At last I looked out of the window, and perceiving a man to be up and down about the door, I went out to him and asked him what he was; but, poor man, the water stood in his eyes. So I perceived what he wanted. I went in, therefore, and told it in the house, and we showed the thing to our Lord. So He sent me out again to entreat him to come in; but I dare say I had hard work to do it.' Great-heart's whole account of Mr. Fearing always brings the water to my eyes also. It is indeed a delicious piece of English prose. If I were a professor of *belles lettres* instead of what I am, I would compel all my students, under pain of rustication, to get those three or four classical pages by heart till they could neither perpetrate nor tolerate bad English any more. This camp-fire tale, told by an old soldier, about a troublesome

young recruit and all his adventures, touches, surely, the high-water mark of sweet and undefiled English. Great-heart was not the first soldier who could handle both the sword and the pen, and he has not been the last. But not Caesar and not Napier themselves ever handled those two instruments better.

2. Great-heart had just returned to his Master's house from having seen Mr. Fearing safely through all his troubles and well over the river, when, behold, another caravan of pilgrims is ready for his convoy. For Great-heart, you must know, was the Interpreter's armed servant. When at any time Great-heart was off duty, which in those days was but seldom, he took up his quarters again in the Interpreter's house. As he says himself, he came back from the river-side only to look out of the Interpreter's window to see if there was any more work on the way for him to do. And, as good luck would have it, as has been said, the guide was just come back from his adventures with Mr. Fearing when a pilgrim party, than which he had never seen one more to his mind, was introduced to him by his Master, the Interpreter. 'The Interpreter,' so we read at this point, 'then called for a man-servant of his, one Great-heart, and bid him take sword, and helmet, and shield, and take these, my daughters,' said he, 'and conduct them to the house called Beautiful, at which place they will rest next. So he took his weapons and went before them, and the Interpreter said, God-speed.'

3. Now I saw in my dream that they went on, and Great-heart went before them, so they came to

the place where Christian's burden fell off his back and tumbled into a sepulchre. Here, then, they made a pause, and here also they blessed God. 'Now,' said Christiana, 'it comes to my mind what was said to us at the gate; to wit, that we should have pardon by word and by deed. What it is to have pardon by deed, Mr. Great-heart, I suppose you know; wherefore, if you please, let us hear your discourse thereof.' 'So then, to speak to the question,' said Great-heart. You have all heard about the 'question-day' at Highland communions. That day is so called because questions that have arisen in the minds of 'the men' in connection with doctrine and with experience are on that day set forth, debated out, and solved by much meditation and prayer; age, saintliness, doctrinal and experimental reading, and personal experience all making their contribution to the solution of the question in hand. Just such a question, then, and handled in such a manner, was that question which whiled the way and cheated the toil till the pilgrims came to the House Beautiful. The great doctrinal and experimental Puritans, with Hooker at their head, put forth their full strength and laid out their finest work just on this same question that Christiana gave out at the place, somewhat ascending, upon which stood a cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a sepulchre. But not the great Comment on The Galatians itself, next to the Holy Bible as it is, as most fit for a wounded conscience; no, nor that perfect mass of purest gold, The Learned Discourse of Justification, nor anything else of that kind known to me, is for one moment,

to compare in beauty, in tenderness, in eloquence, in scriptural depth, and in scriptural simplicity with Great-heart's noble resolution of Christiana's question which he made on the way from the Interpreter's house to the House Beautiful. 'This is brave!' exclaimed that mother in Israel, when the guide had come to an end. 'Methinks it makes my heart to bleed to think that He should bleed for me. O Thou loving One! O Thou blessed One! Thou deservest to have me, for Thou hast bought me. No marvel that this made the water to stand in my husband's eyes, and that it made him trudge so nimbly on. O Mercy, that thy father and thy mother were here; yea, and Mrs. Timorous too! Nay, I wish now with all my heart that here was Madam Wanton too. Surely, surely their hearts would be affected here!' Promise me to read at home Great-heart's discourse on the Righteousness of Christ, and you will thank me for having exacted the promise.

The incongruity of a soldier handling such questions, and especially in such a style, has stumbled some of John Bunyan's fault-finding readers. The same incongruity stumbled 'the Honourable Colonel Hacker, at Peebles or elsewhere,' to whom Cromwell sent these from Edinburgh on the 25th December 1650—'But indeed I was not satisfied with your last speech to me about Empson, that he was a better preacher than fighter or soldier—or words to that effect. Truly, I think that he that prays and preaches best will fight best. I know nothing that will give like courage and confidence as the knowledge of God in Christ will;

and I bless God to see any in this army able and willing to impart the knowledge they have for the good of others. I pray you receive Captain Empson lovingly: I dare assure you he is a good man and a good officer; I would we had no worse.'

4. 'Will you not go in and stay till morning?' said the porter to Great-heart, at the gate of the House Beautiful. 'No,' said the guide; 'I will return to my lord to-night.' 'O sir!' cried Christiana and Mercy, 'we know not how to be willing you should leave us in our pilgrimage. Oh that we might have your company till our journey's end.' Then said James, the youngest of the boys, 'Pray be persuaded to go with us and help us, because we are so weak and the way so dangerous as it is.' 'I am at my lord's commandment,' said Great-heart. 'If he shall allow me to be your guide quite through, I shall willingly wait upon you. But here you failed at first; for when he bid me come thus far with you, then you should have begged me of him to have gone quite through with you, and he would have granted your request. However, at present, I must withdraw, and so, good Christiana, Mercy, and my brave children, adieu!' 'Help lost for want of asking for,' is our author's condemnatory comment on the margin at this point in the history. And there is not a single page in my history, or in yours, my brethren, on which the same marginal lament is not written. What help we would have had on our Lord's promise if we had but taken the trouble to ask for it! And what help we once had, and have now lost, just because when we had it we did not

ask for a continuance of it! 'No,' said Great-heart to the porter, and to the two women, and to James —'No, I will return to my lord to-night. I am at my lord's commandment; only, if he shall still allot me I shall willingly wait upon you.'

Now, what with the House Beautiful, so full of the most delightful company; what with music in the house and music in the heart; what with Mr. Brisk's courtship of Mercy, Matthew's illness, Mr. Skill's cure of the sick man, and what not—a whole month passed by like a day in that so happy house. But at last Christiana and Mercy signified it to those of the house that it was time for them to be up and going. Then said Joseph to his mother, 'It is convenient that you send back to the house of Mr. Interpreter to pray him to grant that Mr. Great-heart should be sent to us that he may be our conductor the rest of our way.' 'Good boy,' said she, 'I had almost forgot.' So she drew up a petition and prayed Mr. Watchful the porter to send it by some fit man to her good friend, Mr. Interpreter; who, when it was come and he had seen the contents of the petition, said to the messenger, 'Go, tell them that I will send him.' . . . Now, about this time one knocked at the door. So the porter opened, and, behold, Mr. Great-heart was there! But when he came in, what joy was there! Then said Mr. Great-heart to the two women, 'My lord has sent each of you a bottle of wine, and also some parched corn, together with a couple of pomegranates. He has also sent the boys some figs and raisins to refresh you on your way.' 'The weak may sometimes call the strong

to prayers,' I read again in the margin opposite the mention of Joseph's name. Not that I am strong, and not that she is weak, but one of my people I spent an hour with last afternoon whom you would to a certainty have called weak had you seen her and her surrounding,—she so called me to prayer that I had to hurry home and go straight to it. And all last night and all this morning I have had as many pomegranates as I could eat and as much wine as I could drink. Yes; you attend to what the weakest will sometimes say to you, and they will often put you on the way to get Great-heart back again with a load of wines and fruits and corn on his shoulder to refresh you on your journey. 'Good boy!' said Christiana to Joseph her youngest son, 'Good boy! I had almost forgot!'

5. When old Mr. Honest began to nod after the good supper that Gaius mine host gave to the pilgrims, 'What, sir,' cried Great-heart, 'you begin to be drowsy; come, rub up; now here's a riddle for you.' Then said Mr. Honest, 'Let's hear it.' Then said Mr. Great-heart,

> 'He that will kill, must first be overcome;
> Who live abroad would, first must die at home.'

'Hah!' said Mr. Honest, 'it is a hard one; hard to expound, and harder still to practise.' Yes; this after-supper riddle of Mr. Great-heart is a hard one in both respects; and for this reason, because the learned and much experienced guide—learned with all that his lifelong quarters in the Interpreter's House could teach him, and experienced with a lifetime's accumulated experience of the pilgrim life—has put all his learning and all his life into

these two mysterious lines. But old Honest, once he had sufficiently rubbed up his eyes and his intellects, gave the answer:

> 'He first by grace must conquèred be
> That sin would mortify.
> And who, that lives, would convince me,
> Unto himself must die.'

Exactly; shrewd old Honest; you have hit off both Great-heart and his riddle too. You have dived into the deepest heart of the Interpreter's man-servant. 'The magnanimous man' was Aristotle's masterpiece. That great teacher of mind and morals created for the Greek world their Great-heart. But, 'thou must understand,' says Bunyan to his readers, 'that I never went to school to Aristotle or Plato. No; but to Paul, who taught Bunyan that what Aristotle calls magnanimity is really pride—taught him that, till there is far more of the Christian religion in those two doggerel lines at Gaius's supper-table than there is in all The Ethics taken together. And it is only from a personal experience of the same life as that which the guide puts here into his riddle that any man's proud heart will become really humble and thus really great, really enlarged, and of an all-embracing hospitality like Cromwell's and Great-heart's and John Bunyan's own. Would you, then, become a Great-heart too? And would you be employed in your day as they were employed in their day? Then expound to yourself, and practise, and follow out that deep riddle with which Great-heart so woke up old Honest:

> 'He that will kill, must first be overcome;
> Who live abroad would, first must die at home.

6. Great-heart again and again at the riverside, Great-heart sending pilgrim after pilgrim over the river with rapture, and he himself still summoned to turn his back on the Celestial City, and to retrace his steps through the land of Beulah, through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and through the Valley of Humiliation, and back to the Interpreter's house to take on another and another and another convoy of fresh pilgrims, and his own abundant entrance still put off and never to come,—our hearts bleed for poor Great-heart. Back and forward, back and forward, year after year, this noble soul uncomplainingly goes. And, ever as he waves his hand to another pilgrim entering with trumpets within the gates, he salutes his next pilgrim charge with the brave words: 'Yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two: having a desire to depart and to be with Christ. Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you, for your furtherance and joy of faith by my coming to you again.' If Great-heart could not 'usher himself out of this life' along with Christiana, and Mercy, and Mr. Honest, and Standfast, and Valiant-for-truth—if he had still to toil back and bleed his way up again at the head of another happy band of pilgrims—well, after all is said, what had the Celestial City itself to give to Great-heart better than such blessed work? With every such returning journey he got a more and more enlarged, detached, hospitable, and Christ-like heart, and the King's palace in very glory itself had nothing better in store for this soldier-guide than that. A nobler heaven Great-heart

could not taste than he had already in himself, as he championed another and another pilgrim company from his Master's earthly gate to his Master's heavenly gate. Like Paul, his apostolic prototype, Great-heart sometimes vacillated just for a moment when he came a little too near heaven, and felt its magnificent and almost dissolving attractions full in his soul. You will see Great-heart's mind staggering for a moment between rest and labour, between war and peace, between 'Christ' on earth and 'Christ' in heaven—you will see all that set forth with great sympathy and great ability in Principal Rainy's new book on Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, and in the chapter entitled, The Apostle's Choice between Living and Dying.

Then there came a summons for Mr. Standfast. At which he called to him Mr. Great-heart, and said unto him, 'Sir, although it was not my hap to be much in your good company in the days of my pilgrimage, yet, since the time I knew you, you have been profitable to me. When I came from home I left behind me a wife and five small children. Let me entreat you, at your return (for I know that you will go and return to your master's house in hopes that you may be a conductor to more of the holy pilgrims), that you send to my family and let them be acquainted with all that hath and shall happen to me. Tell them, moreover, of my happy arrival to this place, and of the present late blessed condition I am in, and so on for many other messages and charges.' Yes, Mr. Standfast; very good. But I would have liked you on your deathbed much better if you had had a word to spare from yourself

and your wife and your children for poor Great-heart himself, who had neither wife nor children, nor near hope of heaven, but only your trust and charge and many such-like trusts and charges to carry out when you are at home and free of all trust and all charge and all care. But yours is the way of all the pilgrims—so long, at least, as they are in this selfish life. Let them and their children only be well looked after, and they have not many thoughts or many words left for those who sweat and bleed to death for them and theirs. They lean on this and that Great-heart all their own way up, and then they leave their widows and children to lean on whatever Great-heart is sent to meet them; but it is not one pilgrim in ten who takes the thought or has the heart to send a message to Mr. Great-heart himself for his own consolation and support. I read that Mr. Ready-to-halt alone, good soul, had the good feeling to do it. He thanked Mr. Great-heart for his conduct and for his kindness, and so addressed himself to his journey. All the same, noble Great-heart! go on in thy magnanimous work. Take back all their errands. Seek out at any trouble all their wives and children. Embark again and again on all thy former battles and hardships for the good of other men. But be assured that all this thy labour is not in vain in thy Lord. Be well assured that not one drop of thy blood or thy sweat or thy tears shall fall to the ground on that day when they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. Go back, then, from thy well-earned rest, O brave

Great-heart! go back to thy waiting task. Put on again thy whole armour. Receive again, and again fulfil, thy Master's commission, till He has no more commissions left for thy brave heart and thy bold hand to execute. And, one glorious day, while thou art still returning to thy task, it shall suddenly sound in thy dutiful ears:—'Well done! good and faithful servant!' And then thou too

> 'Shalt hang thy trumpet in the hall
> And study war no more.'

XLIII

MR. READY-TO-HALT

'For I am ready to halt.'—*David.*

MR. READY-TO-HALT is the Mephibosheth of the pilgrimage. While Mephibosheth was still a child in arms, his nurse let the young prince fall, and from that day to the day of his death he was lame in both his feet. Mephibosheth's life-long lameness, and then David's extraordinary grace to the disinherited cripple in commanding him to eat continually at the king's table; in those two points we have all that we know about Mr. Ready-to-halt also. We have no proper portrait, as we say, of Mr. Ready-to-halt. Mr. Ready-to-halt is but a name on John Bunyan's pages—a name set upon two crutches; but, then, his simple name is so suggestive, and his two crutches are so eloquent, that I feel as if we might venture to take this life-long lameter and his so serviceable crutches for our character-lecture to-night.

John Bunyan, who could so easily and so delightfully have done it, has given us no information at all about Mr. Ready-to-halt's early days. For once his English passion for a pedigree has not compelled our author's pen. We would have liked immensely to have been told the name, and to have seen

displayed the whole family tree of young Ready-to-halt's father; and, especially, of his mother. Who was his nurse also? And did she ever forgive herself for the terrible injury she had done her young master? What were his occupations and amusements as a little cripple boy? Who made him his first crutch? Of what wood was it made? And at what age, and under whose kind and tender directions did he begin to use it? And, then, with such an infirmity, what ever put it into Mr. Ready-to-halt's head to attempt the pilgrimage? For the pilgrimage was a task and a toil that took all the limbs and all the lungs and all the labours and all the endurances that the strongest and the bravest of men could bring to bear upon it. How did this complete cripple ever get through the Slough, and first up and then down the Hill Difficulty, and past all the lions, and over a thousand other obstacles and stumbling-blocks, till he arrived at mine host's so hospitable door? The first surprised sight we get of this so handicaped pilgrim is when Great-heart and Feeble-mind are in the heat of their discourse at the hostelry door. At that moment Mr. Ready-to-halt came by with his crutches in his hand, and he also was going on pilgrimage. Thus, therefore, they went on. Mr. Great-heart and Mr. Honest went on before, Christiana and her children went next, and Mr. Feeble-mind and Mr. Ready-to-halt came behind with his crutches.

'Put by the curtains, look within my veil,
Turn up my metaphors, and do not fail,
There, if thou seekest them, such things to find,
As will be helpful to an honest mind.'

1. Well, then, when we put by the curtains and turn up the metaphors, what do we find? What, but just this, that poor Mr. Ready-to-halt was, after all, the greatest and the best believer, as the New Testament would have called him, in all the pilgrimage. We have not found so great faith as that of Mr. Ready-to-halt, no, not in the very best of the pilgrim bands. Each several pilgrim had, no doubt, his own good qualities; but, at pure and downright believing—at taking God at His bare and simple word—Mr. Ready-to-halt beat them all. All that flashes in upon us from one shining word that stands on the margin of our so metaphorical author. This single word, the 'promises,' hangs like a key of gold beside the first mention of Mr. Ready-to-halt's crutches—a key such that in a moment it throws open the whole of Mr. Ready-to-halt's otherwise lockfast and secret and inexplicable life. There it all is, as plain as a pike-staff now! Yes; Mr. Ready-to-halt's crutches are just the divine promises. I wonder I did not see that all the time. Why, I could compose all his past life myself now. I have his father and his mother and his nurse at my finger-ends now. This poor pilgrim—unless it would be impertinence to call him poor any more—had no limbs to be called limbs. Such limbs as he had were only an encumbrance to this unique pedestrian. All the limbs he had were in his crutches. He had not one atom of strength to lean upon apart from his crutches. A bone, a muscle, a tendon, a sinew, may be ill-nourished, undeveloped, green, and unknit, but, at the worst, they are inside of a man and they are his own. But a crutch, of however good wood it may

be made, and however good a lame man may be at using it—still, a crutch at its best is but an outside additament; it is not really and originally a part of a man's very self at all. And yet a lame man is not himself without his crutch. Other men do not need to give a moment's forethought when they wish to rise up to walk, or to run, or to leap, or to dance. But the lame man has to wait till his crutches are brought to him; and then, after slowly and painfully hoisting himself up upon his crutches, with great labour, he at last takes the road. Mr. Ready-to-halt, then, is a man of God; but he is one of those men of God who have no godliness within themselves. He has no inward graces. He has no past experiences. He has no attainments that he can for one safe moment take his stand upon, or even partly lean upon. Mr. Ready-to-halt is absolutely and always dependent upon the promises. The promises of God in Holy Scripture are this man's very life. All his religion stands in the promises Take away the promises, and Mr. Ready-to-halt is a heap of heaving rags on the roadside. He cannot take a single step unless upon a promise. But, at the same time, give Mr. Ready-to-halt a promise in his hand and he will wade the Slough upon it, and scale up and slide down the Hill Difficulty upon it, and fight a lion, and even brain Beelzebub with it, till he will with a grudge and a doubt exchange it even for the chariots and the horses that wait him at the river. What a delight our Lord would have taken in Mr. Ready-to-halt had He come across him on His way to the passover! How He would have given Mr. Ready-to-halt His

arm; how He would have made Himself late by walking with him, and would still have waited for him! Nay, had that been a day of chap-books in carpenters' shops and on the village stalls, how He would have had Mr. Ready-to-halt's story by heart had any brass-worker in Galilee told the history! Our Lord was within an inch of telling that story Himself, when He showed Thomas His hands and His side. And at another time and in another place we might well have had Mr. Ready-to-halt as one more of our Lord's parables for the common people. Only, He left the delight and the reward of drawing out this parable to one He already saw and dearly loved in a far-off island of the sea, the Puritan tinker of Evangelical England.

2. And now, after all that, would you think it going too far if I were to say that in making Himself like unto all His brethren, our Lord made Himself like Mr. Ready-to-halt too? Indeed He did. And it was because his Lord did this, that Mr. Ready-to-halt so loved his Lord as to follow Him upon crutches. It would not be thought seemly, perhaps, to carry the figure too close to our Lord. But, figure apart, it is only orthodox and scriptural to say that our Lord accomplished His pilgrimage and finished His work leaning all along upon His Father's promises. Esaias is very bold about this also, for he tells his readers again and again that their Messiah, when He comes, will have to be held up. He will have to be encouraged, comforted, and carried through by Jehovah. And in one remarkable passage he lets us see Jehovah hooping Messiah's staff first with brass, and then with silver, and then

with gold. Let Thomas Goodwin's genius set the heavenly scene full before us. 'You have it dialoguewise set forth,' says that great preacher. 'First Christ shows His commission, telling God how He had called Him and fitted Him for the work of redemption, and He would know what reward He should receive of Him for so great an undertaking. God at first offers low; only the elect of Israel. Christ thinks these too few, and not worth so great a labour and work, because few of the Jews would come in; and therefore He says that He would labour in vain if this were all His recompense; and yet withal He tells God that seeing His heart is so much set on saving sinners, to satisfy Him, He will do it even for those few. Upon this God comes off more freely, and openeth His heart more largely to Him, as meaning more amply to content Him for His pains in dying. "It is a light thing," says God to Him, "that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob—that is not worth Thy dying for. I value Thy sufferings more than so. I will give Thee for a salvation to the ends of the earth." Upon this He made a promise to Christ, a promise which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began. God cannot lie, and, most of all, not to His Son.'

And, then, more even than that. This same deep divine tells us that it is a certain rule in divinity that, whatsoever we receive from Christ, that He Himself first receives in Himself for us. All the promises of God's word are made and fulfilled to Christ first, and so to us in and after Him. In other words, our Lord's life was so planned for Him

in heaven and was so followed out and fulfilled by Him on earth, that, to take up the metaphor again, He actually tried every crutch and every staff with His own hands and with His own armpits; He actually leaned again and again His own whole weight upon every several one of them. Every single promise, the most unlikely for Him to lean upon and to plead, yet, be sure of it, He somehow made experiment upon them all, and made sure that there was sufficient and serviceable grace within and under every one of them. So that, Mr. Ready-to-halt, there is no possible staff you can take into your hand that has not already been in the hand of your Lord. Think of that, O Mr. Ready-to-halt! Reverence, then, and almost worship thy staff! Throw all thy weight upon thy staff. Confide all thy weakness to it. Talk to it as thou walkest with it. Make it talk to thee. Worm out of it all its secrets about its first Owner. And let it instruct thee about how He walked with it and how He handled it. The Bible is very bold with its Master. It calls Him by the most startling names sometimes. There is no name that a penitent and a returning sinner goes by that the Bible does not put somewhere upon the sinner's Saviour. And in one place it as good as calls Him Ready-to-halt in as many words. Nay, it lets us see Him halting altogether for a time; ay, oftener than once; and only taking the road again when a still stronger staff was put into his trembling hand. And if John had but had room in his crowded gospel he would have given us the very identical psalm with which our Lord took to the upward way again, strong in His new staff. 'For I am ready to

halt,' was His psalm in the house of His pilgrimage, 'and My sorrow is continually before Me. Mine enemies are lively, and they are strong; and they that hate Me wrongfully are multiplied. They also that render evil for good are Mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is. Forsake Me not, O Lord; O My God, be not far from Me. Make haste to help Me, O Lord My salvation.'

3. Among all the devout and beautiful fables of the 'dispensation of paganism,' there is nothing finer than the fable of blind Tiresias and his staff. By some sad calamity this old prophet had lost the sight of his eyes, and to compensate their servant for that great loss the gods endowed him with a staff with eyes. As Aaron's rod budded before the testimony and bloomed blossoms and yielded almonds, so Tiresias' staff budded eyes, and divine eyes too, for the blind prophet's guidance and direction. Tiresias had but to take his heaven-given staff in his hand, when, straightway, such a divinity entered into the staff that it both saw for him with divine eyes, and heard for him with divine ears, and then led him and directed him, and never once in all his after journeys let him go off the right way. All other men about him, prophets and priests both, often lost their way, but Tiresias after his blindness, never, till Tiresias and his staff became a proverb and a parable in the land. And just such a staff, just such a crutch, just such a pair of crutches, were the crutches of our own so homely Mr. Ready-to-halt. With all their lusty limbs, all the other pilgrims often stumbled and went out of their way till they had to be helped up, led back, and their

faces set right again. But, last as Mr. Ready-to-halt always came in the procession—behind even the women and the children as his crutches always kept him—you will seek in vain for the dot of those crutches on any by-path or on any wrong road. No; the fact is, if you wish to go to the same city, and are afraid you lose the way; as Evangelist said, 'Do you see yon shining light?' so I would say to you to-night, 'Do you see these crutch-marks on the road?' Well, keep your feet in the prints of these crutches, and as sure as you do that they will lead you straight to a chariot and horses, which, again, will carry you inside the city gates. For Mr. Ready-to-halt's crutches have not only eyes like Tiresias' staff, they have ears also, and hands and feet. A lamp also burns on those crutches; and wine and oil distil from their wonderful wood. Happy blindness that brings such a staff! Happy exchange! eyes full of earth and sin for eyes full of heaven and holiness!

4. 'They began to be merry,' says our Lord, telling the story of the heart-broken father who had got back his younger son from a far country. And even Feeble-mind and Ready-to-halt begin to be merry on the green that day after Doubting Castle has fallen to Great-heart's arms. Now, Christiana, if need was, could play upon the viol, and her daughter Mercy upon the lute; and, since they were so merry disposed, she played them a lesson, and Mr. Ready-to-halt would dance. So he paid a boy a penny to hold one of his crutches, and, taking Miss Much-afraid by the hand, to dancing they went. And, I promise you he footed it well; the lame man

leaped as an hart; also the girl was to be commended, for she answered the music handsomely. In spite of his life-long infirmity, there was deep down in Mr. Ready-to-halt an unsuspected fund of good-humour. There was no heartier merriment on the green that day than was the merriment that Mr. Ready-to-halt knocked out of his nimble crutch. 'True, he could not dance without one crutch in his hand.' True, dear and noble Bunyan, thou canst not write a single page at any time or on any subject without thy genius and thy tenderness and thy divine grace marking the page as thine own alone!

5. The next time we see Mr. Ready-to-halt he is coming in on his crutches to see Christiana, for she has sent for him to see him. So she said to him, 'Thy travel hither hath been with difficulty, but that will make thy rest the sweeter.' And then in process of time there came a post to the town and his business this time was with Mr. Ready-to-halt. 'I am come to thee in the name of Him whom thou hast loved and followed, though upon crutches. And my message is to tell thee that He expects thee at His table to sup with Him in His kingdom the next day after Easter.' 'I am sent for,' said Mr. Ready-to-halt to his fellow-pilgrims, 'and God shall surely visit you also. These crutches,' he said, 'I bequeath to my son that shall tread in my steps, with an hundred warm wishes that he may prove better than I have done.' Isaac was a child of promise, and Mr. Ready-to-halt had an Isaac also on whom his last thoughts turned. Isaac had been born to Abraham by a special and extraordinary and supernatural inter-

position of the grace and the power of God; and Mr. Ready-to-halt had always looked on himself as a second Abraham in that respect. A second Abraham, and more. True, his son was not yet a pilgrim; perhaps he was too young to be so called; but Great-heart will take back the old man's crutches —Great-heart was both man-of-war and beast-of-burden to the pilgrims and their wives and children —and will in spare hours teach young Ready-to-halt the use of the crutch, till the son can use with the same effect as his father his father's instrument. Is your child a child of promise? Is he to you a product of nature, or of grace? Did you receive him and his brothers and sisters from God after you were as good as dead? Did you ever steal in when his nurse was at supper and say over his young cradle, He hath not dealt with me after my sins, nor rewarded me according to my iniquities? Is it in your will laid up with Christ in God about your crutches and your son what Mr. Ready-to-halt dictated on his deathbed? And does God know that there is no wish in your old heart a hundred times so warm for your son as is this wish,—that he may prove better at handling God's promises than you have been? Then, happy son, who has old Mr. Ready-to-halt for his father!

6. 'He whom thou hast loved and followed, though upon crutches, expects thee at His table the next day after Easter.' Take comfort, cripples! Had it been said that the King so expects Great-heart, or Standfast, or Valiant-for-truth, that would have been after the manner of the kings of this world. But to insist on having Mr. Ready-to-halt

beside Him by such and such a day; to send such a post to a pilgrim who has not a single sound bone in all his body; to a sinner without a single trustworthy grace in all his heart; to a poor and simple believer who has nothing in his hand but one of God's own promises—Who is a king like unto our King? Surely King David was never a better type of Christ than when he said to Mephibosheth, lame in both his feet from his nurse's arms: 'Fear not, Mephibosheth, for I will surely show thee kindness, and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.' And Mephibosheth shall always be our spokesman when he bows himself and says in return: 'What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?'

XLIV

VALIANT-FOR-TRUTH

'—They are not valiant for the truth.'—*Jeremiah.*
'—Ye should contend earnestly for the faith.'—*Jude.*

'Forget not Master Valiant-for-the-Truth,
That man of courage, tho' a very youth.
Tell every one his spirit was so stout,
No man could ever make him face about.'

Bunyan.

'I AM of Dark-land, for there was I born, and there my father and mother are still.' 'Dark-land,' said the guide; 'doth not that lie upon the same coast as the City of Destruction?' 'Yes, it doth,' replied Valiant-for-truth. 'And had I not found incommodity there, I had not forsaken it at all; but finding it altogether unsuitable to me, and very unprofitable for me, I forsook it for this way. Now, that which caused me to come on pilgrimage was this. We had one Mr. Tell-true came into our parts, and he told it about what Christian had done, that went from the City of Destruction. That man so told the story of Christian and his travels that my heart fell into a burning haste to be gone after him, nor could my father and mother stay me, so I got from them, and am come thus far on my way.'

1. A very plain and practical lesson is already read to us all in Valiant-for-truth's explanation of his

own pilgrimage. He tells the guide that he was made a pilgrim just by having the story of The Pilgrim told to him. All that Tell-true did was just to recite the story of the pilgrim, when young Valiant's heart fell into a burning haste to be a pilgrim too. My brethren, could any lesson be plainer? Read the *Pilgrim's Progress* with your children. And, after a time, read it again till they call it beautiful, and till you see the same burning haste in their hearts that young Valiant felt in his heart. Circulate the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Make opportunities to give the *Pilgrim's Progress* to the telegraph boys and errand boys at your door. Never go on a holiday without taking a dozen cheap and tasteful copies of *The Pilgrim* to give to boys and girls in the country. Make sure that no one, old or young, of your acquaintance, in town or country, is without a good copy of *The Pilgrim*. And the darker their house is, make all the more sure that John Bunyan is in it.

> 'Now may this little book a blessing be,
> To those that love this little book and me
> And may its buyer have no cause to say
> His money is but lost or thrown away.'

2. But the great lesson of Valiant's so impressive life lies in the tremendous fight he had with three ruffians who all set upon him at once and well-nigh made an end of him. For, when we put by the curtains here again, and turn up the metaphors, what do we find? What, but a lesson of first-rate importance for many men among ourselves; for many public men, many ministers, and many other much-in-earnest men. For Valiant, as his name

tells us, was set to contend for the truth. He had the truth. The truth was put into his keeping, and he was bound to defend it. He was thrown into a life of controversy, and thus into all the terrible temptations—worse than the temptations to whoredom or wine—that accompany a life of controversy. The three scoundrels that fell upon Valiant at the mouth of the lane were Wildhead, Inconsiderate, and Pragmatic. In other words, the besetting temptations of many men who are set as defenders of the truth in religion, as well as in other matters, is to be wild-headed, inconsiderate, self-conceited, and intolerably arrogant. The bloody battle that Valiant fought, you must know, was not fought at the mouth of any dark lane in the midnight city, nor on the side of any lonely road in the moonless country. This terrible fight was fought in Valiant's own heart. For Valiant was none of your calculating and cold-blooded friends of the truth. He did not wait till he saw the truth walking in silver slippers. Let any man lay a finger on the truth, or wag a tongue against the truth, and he will have to settle it with Valiant. His love for the truth was a passion. There was a fierceness in his love for the truth that frightened ordinary men even when they were on his own side. Valiant would have died for the truth without a murmur. But, with all that, Valiant had to learn a hard and a cruel lesson. He had to learn that he, the best friend of truth as he thought he was, was at the same time, as a matter of fact, the greatest enemy that the truth had. He had to take home the terrible discovery that no man had hurt the truth so much

as he had done. Save me from my friend! the truth was heard to say, as often as she saw him taking up his weapons in her behalf. We see all that every day. We see Wildhead at his disservice of the truth every day. Sometimes above his own name, and sometimes with grace enough to be ashamed to give his name, in the newspapers. Sometimes on the platform; sometimes in the pulpit; and sometimes at the dinner-table. But always to the detriment of the truth. In blind fury he rushes at the character and the good name of men who were servants of the truth before he was born, and whose shield he is not worthy to bear. How shall Wildhead be got to see that he and the like of him are really the worst friends the truth can possibly have? Will he never learn that in his wild-bull gorings at men and at movements, he is both hurting himself and hurting the truth as no sworn enemy of his and of the truth can do? Will he never see what an insolent fool he is to go on imputing bad motives to other men, when he ought to be prostrate before God on account of his own? More than one wild-headed student of William Law has told me what a blessing they have got from that great man's teaching on the subject of controversy. Will the Wildheads here to-night take a line or two out of that peace-making author and lay them to heart? 'My dear L——, take notice of this, that no truths, however solid and well-grounded, will help you to any divine life, but only so far as they are taught, nourished, and strengthened by an unction from above; and that nothing more dries and extinguishes this heavenly

unction than a talkative reasoning temper that is always catching at every opportunity of hearing or telling some religious matters. Stop your ears and shut your eyes to all religious tales. . . . I would no more bring a false charge against a deist than I would bear false witness against an apostle. And if I knew how to do the deists more justice in debate I would gladly do it. . . . And as the gospel requires me to be as glad to see piety, equity, strict sobriety, and extensive charity in a Jew or a Gentile as in a Christian; as it obliges me to look with pleasure upon their virtues, and to be thankful to God that such persons have so much of true and sound Christianity in them; so it cannot be an unchristian spirit to be as glad to see truths in one party of Christians as in another, and to look with pleasure upon any good doctrines that are held by any sect of Christian people, and to be thankful to God that they have so much of the genuine saving truths of the gospel among them. . . . Selfishness and partiality are very inhuman and base qualities even in the things of this world, but in the doctrines of religion they are of a far baser nature. In the present divided state of the Church, truth itself is torn and divided asunder; and, therefore, he is the only true Catholic who has more of truth and less of error than is hedged in by any divided part. To see this will enable us to live in a divided part unhurt by its division, and keep us in a true liberty and fitness to be edified and assisted by all the good that we hear or see in any other part of the Church. And thus, uniting in heart and spirit with all that is holy and good in all Churches, we enter into the

true communion of saints, and become real members of the Holy Catholic Church, though we are confined to the outward worship of only one particular part of it. And thus we will like no truth the less because Ignatius Loyola or John Bunyan were very jealous for it, nor have the less aversion to any error because Dr. Trapp or George Fox had brought it forth.' If Wildhead would take a winter of William Law, it would sweeten his temper, and civilise his manners, and renew his heart.

3. Inconsiderate, again, is the shallow creature he is, and does the endless mischief that he does, largely for lack of imagination. He never thinks —neither before he speaks nor after he has spoken. He never put himself in another man's place all his days. He is incapable of doing that. He has neither the head nor the heart to do that. He never once said, How would I like that said about me? or, How would I like that done to me? or, How would that look and taste and feel to me if I were in So-and-so's place? It needs genius to change places with other men; it needs a grace beyond all genius; and this poor headless and heartless creature does not know what genius is. It needs imagination, the noblest gift of the mind, and it needs love, the noblest grace of the heart, to consider the case of other people, and to see, as Butler says, that we differ as much from other people as they differ from us. And it is by far the noblest use of the imagination, far nobler than carving a Laocoon, or painting a Last Judgment, or writing a 'Paradiso' or a 'Paradise Lost,' to put ourselves into the places of other men so as

to see with their eyes, and feel with their hearts, and sympathise with their principles, and even with their prejudices. Now, the inconsiderate man has so little imagination and so little love that he is sitting here and does not know what I am saying; and what suspicion he has of what I am saying is just enough to make him dislike both me and what I am saying too. But his dull suspicion and his blind dislike are more than made up for by the love and appreciation of those lovers and defenders of the truth who painfully feel how wild and inconsiderate, how hot-headed, how thoughtless, and how reckless their past service even of God's truth has been.

> 'The King is full of grace and fair regard.
> Consideration, like an angel, came
> And whipp'd the offending Adam out of him.'

4. And as to Pragmatic, I would not call you a stupid person even though you confided to me that you had never heard this footpad's name till to-night. John Bunyan has been borrowing Latin again, and not to the improvement of his style, or to the advantage of his readers. It would be insufferably pragmatic in me to begin to set John Bunyan right in his English; but I had rather offend the shades of a hundred John Bunyans than leave my most unlettered hearer without his full and proper Sabbath-night lesson. The third armed thief, then, that fell upon Valiant was, under other names, Impertinence, Meddlesomeness, Officiousness, Over-Interference. Pragmatic,—by whatever name he calls himself, there is no mistaking him. He is never satisfied. He is never pleased. He

is never thankful. He is always setting his superiors right. He is like the Psalmist in one thing, he has more understanding than all his teachers. And he enjoys nothing more than in letting them know that. There is nothing he will not correct you in—from cutting for the stone to commanding the Channel Fleet. Now, if all that has put any visual image of Pragmatic into your mind, you will see at once what an enemy he too is fitted to be to the truth. For the truth does not stand in points, but in principles. The truth does not dwell in the letter but in the spirit. The truth is not served by setting other people right, but by seeing every day and in every thing how far wrong we are ourselves. The truth is like charity in this, that it begins at home. It is like charity in this also, that it never behaves itself unseemly. A pragmatical man, taken along with an inconsiderate man, and then a wild-headed man added on to them, are three about as fatal hands as any truth could fall into. The worst enemy of the truth must pity the truth, and feel his hatred at the truth relenting, when he sees her under the championship of Wildhead, Inconsiderate, and Pragmatic.

5. The first time we see Valiant-for-truth he is standing at the mouth of Dead-man's-lane with his sword in his hand and with his face all bloody. 'They have left upon me, as you see,' said the bleeding man, 'some of the marks of their valour, and have also carried away with them some of mine.' And, in like manner, we see Paul with the blood of Barnabas still upon him when he is writing the thirteenth of First Corinthians; and

John with the blood of the Samaritans still upon him down to his old age when he is writing his First Epistle; and John Bunyan with the blood of the Quakers upon him when he is covertly writing this page of his autobiography under the veil of Valiant-for-truth; and William Law with the blood of Bishop Hoadly and John Wesley dropping on the paper as he pens that golden passage which ends with Dr. Trapp and George Fox. Where did you think Paul got that splendid passage about charity? Where did you think William Law got that companion passage about Church divisions, and about the Church Catholic? Where are such passages ever got by inspired apostles, or by any other men, but out of their own bloody battles with their own wild-headedness, intolerance, dislike, and resentment? Where do you suppose I got the true key to the veiled metaphor of Valiant-for-truth? It does not exactly hang on the door-post of his history. Where, then, could I get it but off the inside wall of my own place of repentance? Just as you understand what I am now labouring to say, not from my success in saying it, but from your own trespasses against humility and love, your unadvised speeches, and your wild and whirling words. Without shame and remorse, without self-condemnation and self-contempt, none of those great passages of Paul, or John, or Bunyan, or Law were ever written; and without a like shame, remorse, self-condemnation, and self-contempt they are not rightly read.

'Oh! who shall dare in this frail scene
On holiest, happiest thoughts to lean,

On Friendship, Kindred, or on Love?
Since not Apostles' hands can clasp
Each other in so firm a grasp,
But they shall change and variance prove.

'But sometimes even beneath the moon
The Saviour gives a gracious boon,
When reconciled Christians meet,
And face to face, and heart to heart,
High thoughts of holy love impart
In silence meek, or converse sweet.

'Oh then the glory and the bliss
When all that pained or seemed amiss
Shall melt with earth and sin away!
When saints beneath their Saviour's eye,
Filled with each other's company,
Shall spend in love th eternal day!'

6. Then said Great-heart to Mr. Valiant-for-truth, 'Thou hast worthily behaved thyself; let me see thy sword.' So he showed it him. When he had taken it in his hand and had looked thereon a while, the guide said: 'Ha! it is a right Jerusalem blade!' 'It is so,' replied its owner. 'Let a man have one of these blades with a hand to wield it, and skill to use it, and he may venture upon an angel with it. Its edges will never blunt. It will cut flesh, and bones, and soul, and spirit, and all.' Both Damascus and Toledo blades were famous in former days for their tenacity and flexibility, and for the beauty and the edge of their steel. But even a Damascus blade would be worthless in a weak, cowardly, or unskilled hand; while even a poor sword in the hand of a good swordsman will do excellent execution. And much more so when you have both a first-rate sword and a first-rate swordsman, such as both Valiant and his

Jerusalem blade were. Ha! yes. This is a right wonderful blade we have now in our hand. For this sword was forged in no earthly fire; and it was whetted to its unapproachable sharpness on no earthly whetstone. But, best of all for us, when a good soldier of Jesus Christ has this sword girt on his thigh he is able then to go forth against himself with it; against his own only and worst enemy—that is, against himself. As here, against his own wildness of head and pride of heart. Against his own want of consideration also. 'My people do not consider.' As also against himself as a lawless invader of other men's freedom of judgment, following of truth, public honour, and good name. As the Arabian warriors see themselves and dress themselves in their swords as in a glass, so did Valiant-for-truth see the thoughts and intents, the joints and the marrow of his own disordered soul in his Jerusalem blade. In the sheen of it he could see himself even when the darkness covered him; and with its two edges all his after-life he slew both all real error in other men and all real evil in himself. 'Thou hast done well,' said Great-heart the guide. 'Thou hast resisted unto blood, striving against sin. Thou shalt abide by us, come in and go out with us, for we are thy companions.'

7. 'Sir,' said the widow indeed to Valiant-for-truth, 'sir, you have in all places shown yourself true-hearted.' The first time she ever saw this man that she is now seeing for the last time on this side the river, his own mother would not have known him, he was so hacked to pieces with the

swords of his three assailants. But as she washed the blood off the mangled man's head and face and hands, she soon saw beneath all his bloody wounds a true, a brave, and a generous-hearted soldier of the Cross. The heart is always the man. And this woman had lived long enough with men to have discovered that. And with all his scars she saw that it was at bottom the truth of his heart that had cast him into so many bloody encounters. There were men in that company, and men near the river too, with far fewer marks of battle, and even of defeat, upon them, who did not get this noble certificate and its accompanying charge and trust from this clear-eyed widow. And, then, she had never forgot—how could she?—his exclamation, and almost embrace of her as of his own mother, when he burst out with his eyes full of blood, 'Why, is this Christian's wife? What! and going on pilgrimage too? It glads my heart! Good man! How joyful will he be when he shall see her and her children enter after him in at the gates into the city!' He would have been hacked a hundred times worse than he was before the widow of Christian, and the mother of his children, would have seen anything but the manliest beauty in a young soldier who could salute an old woman in that way. It gladdened her heart to hear him, you may be sure, as much as it gladdened his heart to see her. And that was the reason that she actually set Great-heart himself aside, and left her children under this young man's sword and shield. 'I would also entreat you to have an eye to my children,' she said. Young men, has any dying mother com-

mitted her children, if you at any time see them faint, to you? Have you ever spoken so comfortably to any poor widow about her sainted husband that she has passed by some of our foremost citizens, and has astonished and offended her lawyers by putting a stripling like you into the trusteeship? Did ever any dying mother say to you that she had seen you to be so true-hearted at all times that she entreated you to have an eye to her children? Speaking at this point for myself, I would rather see my son so trusted at such an hour by such a woman than I would see him the Chancellor of Her Majesty's Exchequer, or the Governor of the Bank of England. And so to-night would you.

XLV

STANDFAST

'So stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.'—*Paul.*

N his supplementary picture of Standfast John Bunyan is seen at his very best, both as a religious teacher and as an English author. On the Enchanted Ground Standfast is set before us with extraordinary insight, sagacity, and wisdom; and then in the terrible river he is set before us with an equally extraordinary rapture and transport; while, in all that, Bunyan composes in English of a strength and a beauty and a music in which he positively surpasses himself. Just before he closes his great book John Bunyan rises up and once more puts forth his very fullest strength, both as a minister of religion and as a classical writer, when he takes Standfast down into that river which that pilgrim tells us has been such a terror to so many, and the thought of which has so often affrighted himself.

When Great-heart and his charge were almost at the end of the Enchanted Ground, so we read, they perceived that a little before them was a solemn noise as of one that was much concerned. So they went on and looked before them. And behold, they saw, as they thought, a man upon his knees, with

hands and eyes lift up, and speaking, as they thought, earnestly to one that was above. They drew nigh, but could not tell what he said; so they went softly till he had done. When he had done, he got up and began to run towards the Celestial City. 'So-ho, friend, let us have your company,' called out the guide. At that the man stopped, and they came up to him. 'I know this man,' said Mr. Honest; 'his name, I know, is Standfast, and he is certainly a right good pilgrim.' Then follows a conversation between Mr. Honest and Mr. Standfast, in which some compliments and courtesies are exchanged, such as are worthy of such men, met at such a time and in such a place. 'Well, but, brother,' said Valiant-for-truth, 'tell us, I pray thee, what was it that was the cause of thy being upon thy knees even now? Was it for that some special mercy laid obligations upon thee, or how?' And then Standfast tells how as he was coming along musing with himself, Madam Bubble presented herself to him and offered him three things. 'I was both aweary and sleepy and also as poor as a howlet, and all that the wicked witch knew. And still she followed me with her enticements. Then I betook me, as you saw, to my knees, and with hands lift up and cries, I prayed to Him who had said that He would help. So just as you came up the gentlewoman went her way. Then I continued to give thanks for my great deliverance; for I verily believe she intended me no good, but rather sought to make stop of me in my journey. What a mercy is it that I did resist her, for whither might she not have drawn me?'

And then, after all this discourse, there was a mixture of joy and trembling among the pilgrims, but at last they broke out and sang:

'What danger is the pilgrim in,
How many are his foes,
How many ways there are to sin,
No living mortal knows!'

1. 'Well, as I was coming along I was musing with myself,' said Standfast. You understand what it is to come along musing with yourself, do you not, my brethren? 'I will muse on the work of Thy hands,' says the Psalmist. And again, 'While I was musing the fire burned.' Well, Standfast was much given to musing, just as David was. Each several pilgrim has his own way of occupying himself on the road; but Standfast could never get his fill just of musing. Standfast loved solitude. Standfast liked nothing better than to walk long stretches at a time all by himself alone. Standfast was like the apostle when he preferred to take the twenty miles from Troas to Assos on foot and alone, rather than to round the cape on shipboard in a crowd. 'Minding himself to go afoot,' says the apostle's companion. It would have made a precious chapter in the Acts of the Apostles had the author of that book been able to give his readers some of Paul's musings as he crossed the Troad on foot that day. But in the absence of Paul's musings we have here the musings of a man whom Paul would not have shaken off had he foregathered with him on that lonely road. For Standfast was in a deep and serious muse mile after mile, when, who should step into the middle of his path right before him but Madam Bubble with her

body and her purse and her bed? Now, had this hungry howlet of a pilgrim been at that moment in any other but a musing mood of mind, he had to a certainty sold himself, soul and body, Celestial City and all, to that impudent slut. But, as He would have it who overrules Madam Bubble's descents, and all things, Standfast was at that moment in one of his most musing moods, and all her smiles and all her offers fell flat and poor upon him. Cultivate Standfast's mood of mind, my brethren. Walk a good deal alone. Strike across country from time to time alone and have good long walks and talks with yourself. And when you know that you are passing places of temptation see that your thoughts, and even your imaginations, are well occupied with solemn considerations about the certain issue of such and such temptations; and then, to you, as to Standfast,

'The arrow seen beforehand slacks its flight.'

2. But, musing alone, the arrow seen beforehand, and all, Standfast would have been a lost man on that lonely road that day had he not instantly betaken himself to his knees. And it was while Standfast was still on his knees that the ascending pilgrims heard that concerned and solemn noise a little ahead of them. Did you ever suddenly come across a man on his knees? Did you ever surprise a man at prayer as Great-heart and his companions surprised Standfast? I do not ask, Did you ever enter a room and find a family around their morning or evening altar? We have all done that. And it left its own impression upon us. But did you ever spring a surprise upon a man on his knees alone and

in broad daylight? I did the other day. It was between eleven and twelve o'clock in the forenoon when I asked a clerk if his master was in Yes, he said, and opened his master's door. When, before I was aware, I had almost fallen over a man on his knees and with his face in his hands. 'I pray thee,' said Valiant-for-truth, 'tell us what it was that drew thee to thy knees even now. Was it that some special mercy laid its obligations on thee, or how?' I did not say that exactly to my kneeling friend, though it was on the point of my tongue to say it. My dear friend, I knew, had his own difficulties, though he was not exactly as poor as a howlet. And it might have been about some of his investments that had gone out of joint that he went that forenoon to Him who had said that He would help. Or, like the author of the *Christian Perfection* and *The Spirit of Prayer*, it was the sixth hour of the day, and he may have gone to his knees for his clerks, or for his boys at school, or for himself and for the man in the same business with himself right across the street. I knew that my friend had the charming book at home in which such counsels as these occur: 'If masters were thus to remember their servants, beseeching God to bless them, letting no day pass without a full performance of this devotion, the benefit would be as great to themselves as to their servants.' And perhaps my friend, after setting his clerks their several tasks for the day, was now asking grace of God for each one of them that they might not be eye-servants and men-pleasers, but the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart. Or, again, he may have read in that noble book this

passage: 'If a father were daily to make some particular prayer to God that He would please to inspire his children with true piety, great humility, and strict temperance, what could be more likely to make the father himself become exemplary in these virtues?' Now, my friend (who can tell?) may just that morning have lost his temper with his son; or he may last night have indulged himself too much in eating, or in drinking, or in debate, or in detraction; and that may have made it impossible for him to fix his whole mind on his office work that morning. Or, just to make another guess, when he opened the book I had asked him to buy and read, he may have lighted on this heavenly passage: 'Lastly, if all people when they feel the first approaches of resentment or envy or contempt towards others; or if in all little disagreements and misunderstandings whatever they should have recourse at such times to a more particular and extraordinary intercession with God for such persons as had roused their envy, resentment, or discontent—this would be a certain way to prevent the growth of all uncharitable tempers.' You may think that I am taking a roundabout way of accounting for my friend's so concerned attitude at twelve o'clock that business day; but the whole thing seemed to me so unusual at such a time and in such a place that I was led to such guesses as these to account for it. In so guessing I see now that I was intruding myself into matters I had no business with; but all that day I could not keep my mind off my blushing friend. For, like Mr. Standfast, my dear friend blushed as he stood up and offered me the chair he had been

kneeling at. 'But, why, did you see me?' said Mr. Standfast. 'Yes, I did,' quoth the other, 'and with all my heart I was glad at the sight.' 'And what did you think?' said Mr. Standfast.

3. 'Was it,' asked Valiant-for-truth, in a holy curiosity, 'was it some special mercy that brought thee to thy knees even now?' Yes; Valiant-for-truth had exactly hit it. Gracious wits, like great wits, jump together. 'Yes,' confessed Standfast, 'I continue to give thanks for my great deliverance.' My brethren, you all pray importunately in your time of sore trouble. Everybody does that. But do you feel an obligation, like Standfast, to abide still on your knees long after your trouble is past? Nature herself will teach us to pray; but it needs grace, and great grace continually renewed, to teach us to praise, and to continue all our days to praise. How we once prayed, ay, as earnestly, and as concernedly, and as careless as to who should see or hear us as Standfast himself! How some of us here to-night used to walk across a whole country all the time praying! How we hoodwinked people in order to get away from them to pray for twenty miles at a time all by ourselves! Under that bush—it still stands to mark the spot; in that wood, long since cut down into ploughed land—we could show our children the spot to this day where we prayed, till a miracle was wrought in our behalf. Yes, till God sent from above and took us as He never took a psalmist, and set our feet upon a still more wonderful rock. How He, yes, He, with His own hand cut the cords, broke the net, and set us free! Come, all ye that fear God! we then said, and said it with

all sincerity too. And yet, how have we forgotten what He did for our soul? We start like a guilty thing surprised when we think how long it is since we had a spell of thanksgiving. Shame on us! What treacherous hearts we have! What short memories we have! How soon we forgive ourselves, and so forget the forgiveness of our God! Brethren, let us still lay plans for praise as we used to do for prayer. If our friends will go out with us, let us at least insist on walking home alone. Let us say with Paul that we get sick at sea; and, besides, that we have some calls to make and some small accounts to settle before we leave the country. Tell them not to wait dinner for us. And then let us take plenty of time. Let us stop at all our old stations and call back all our old terrors; let us repeat aloud our old psalms—the twenty-fifth, the fifty-first, the hundred and third, and the hundred and thirtieth. We used to terrify people with our prayers as Standfast terrified the young pilgrims that day; let us surprise and delight them now with our psalms of thanksgiving. For, with all our disgraceful ingratitude in the past, if William Law is right, we are even yet not far from being great saints, if he is not wrong when he asks: 'Would you know who is the greatest saint in the world? It is not he who prays most or fasts most; it is not he who gives most alms, or is most eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice. But it is he who is most thankful to God, and who has a heart always ready to praise God. This is the perfection of all virtues. Joy in God and thankfulness to God is the highest perfection of a divine

and holy life.' Well, then, what an endless cause of joy and thankfulness have we! Let us acknowledge it, and henceforth employ it; and we shall, please God, even yet be counted as not low down but high up among the saints and the servants of God.

4. Christiana said many kind and wise and beautiful things to all the other pilgrims before she entered the river, but it was observed that though she sent for Mr. Standfast, she said not one word to him when he came; she just gave him her ring. 'The touch is human and affecting,' says Mr. Louis Stevenson, in his delightful paper on Bagster's 'Bunyan,' in the *Magazine of Art*. By the way, do you who are lovers of Bunyan literature know that remarkable and delicious paper? The Messrs. Bagster should secure that paper and should issue an *edition de luxe* of their neglected 'Bunyan,' with Mr. Stevenson's paper for a preface and introduction. Bagster's 'Illustrated Bunyan,' with an introduction on the illustrations by Mr. Louis Stevenson, if I am not much mistaken, would sell by the thousand.

5. Lord Rosebery knows books and loves books, and he has called attention to the surpassing beauty of the English in the deathbed scenes of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. And every lover of pure, tender, and noble English must, like the Foreign Secretary, have all those precious pages by heart. Were it not that we all have a cowardly fear at death ourselves, and think it wicked and cruel even to hint at his approaching death even to a fast-dying man, we would never let any of our friends

lie down on his sick-bed without having a reassuring and victorious page of the *Pilgrim* read to him every day. If the doctors would allow me, I would have these heavenly pages reprinted in sick-bed type for all my people. But I am afraid at the doctors. And thus one after another of my people passes away without the fortification and the foretaste that the deathbeds of Christian, and Christiana, and Hopeful, and Mr. Fearing, and Mr. Feeblemind, and Mr. Honest, and Mr. Standfast would most surely have given to them. Especially the deathbed, if I must so call it, of Mr. Standfast. But as Christiana said nothing that could be heard to Mr. Standfast about his or her latter end, but just looked into his eyes and gave him her ring, so I may not be able to say all that is in my heart when your doctor is standing close by. But you will understand what I would fain say, will you not? You will remember, and will have this heavenly book read to you alternately with your Bible, will you not? Even the most godless doctor will give way to you when you tell him that you know as well as he does just how it is with you, and that you are to have your own way for the last time. I know a doctor who first forbade her minister and her family to tell his patient that she was dying, and at the same time told them to take away from her bedside all such alarming books as the *Pilgrim's Progress* and the *Saint's Rest*, and to read to her a reassuring chapter out of *Old Mortality* and *Pickwick*.

It will, no doubt, put the best-prepared of us into a deep muse, as it put Standfast, when we are

first told that we must at once prepare ourselves for a change of life. But I for one would not for worlds miss that solemn warning, and that last musing-time. It will all be just as my Master pleases; but if it is within His will I shall till then continue to petition Him that I may have a passage over the river like the passage of Standfast. Or, if that may not now be, then, at least, a musing-time like his. The post from the Celestial City brought Mr. Standfast's summons 'open' in his hand. And thus it was that Standfast's translation did not take him by surprise. Standfast was not plunged suddenly and without warning into the terrible river. He took the open summons into his own hand and read it out like a man. After which he went, as his manner was, for a good while into a deep and undisturbed muse. As soon as he came out of his muse he would have Great-heart to be sent for. And then their last conversation together proceeded. And no one interfered with the two brave-hearted men. No one interposed, or said that Great-heart would exhaust or alarm Standfast, or would injuriously hasten his end. Not only so, but all the way till he was half over the river, Standfast kept up his own side of the noble conversation. And it is his side of that half-earthly, whole-heavenly conversation that I would like to have put into suitable type and scattered broadcast over all our sick-beds.

6. 'Tell me,' says Valdes to Julia in his *Christian Alphabet*, 'have you ever crossed a deep river by a ford?' 'Yes,' says Julia, 'I have, many times.' 'And have you remarked how that by looking upon

the water it seemed as though your head swam, so that, if you had not assisted yourself, either by closing your eyes, or by fixing them on the opposite shore, you would have fallen into the water in great danger of drowning?' 'Yes, I have noticed that.' 'And have you seen how by keeping always for your object the view of the land that lies on the other side, you have not felt that swimming of the head, and so have suffered no danger of drowning?' 'I have noticed that too,' replied Julia. Now, it was exactly this same way of looking, not at the black and swirling river, but at the angelic conduct waiting for him at the further bank, and then at the open gate of the Celestial City,—it was this that kept Standfast's head so steady and his heart like a glowing coal while he stood and talked in the middle of the giddy stream. You would have thought it was Paul himself talking to himself on the road to Assos. For I defy even the apostle himself to have talked better or more boldly to himself even on the solid midday road than Standfast talked to himself in the bridgeless river. 'I see myself,' he said, 'at the end of my journey now. My toilsome days are all ended. I am going now to see that head that was crowned with thorns, and that face that was spat upon for me. I loved to hear my Lord spoken of, and wherever I have seen the print of His shoe in the earth I have coveted to set my foot also. His name has been to me as a civet-box; yea, sweeter than all perfumes. His word I did use to gather for my food, and for antidotes against my faintings. He has held me, and I have kept me from my iniquities. Yea, my

steps He has strengthened in my way.' Now, while Standfast was thus in discourse his countenance changed, his strong man bowed down under him, and after he had said 'Take me!' he ceased to be seen of them. But how glorious it was to see how the open region was now filled with horses and chariots, with trumpeters and pipers, and with singers and players on stringed instruments, all to welcome the pilgrims as they went up and followed one another in at the beautiful gate of the city!

XLVI

MADAM BUBBLE

'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.'—*Solomon.*

'I have overcome the world.'—*Our Lord.*

'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.'—*John.*

'This bubble world.'—*Quarles.*

MADAM BUBBLE'S portrait was first painted by the Preacher. And he painted her portrait with extraordinary insight, boldness, and truthfulness. There is that in the Preacher's portrait of Madam Bubble which only comes of the artist having mixed his colours, as Milman says that Tacitus mixed his ink, with resentment and with remorse. Out of His reading of Solomon and Moses and the Prophets on this same subject, as well as out of His own observation and experience, conflict and conquest, our Lord added some strong and deep and inward touches of His own to that well-known picture, and then named it by the New Testament name of the World. And then, after Him, His longest-lived disciple set forth the same mother and her three daughters under the three names that still stick to them to this day,—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride

of life. But it was reserved for John Bunyan to fill up and to finish those outlines of Scripture and to pour over the whole work his own depth and strength of colour, till, altogether, Madam Bubble stands out as yet another masterpiece of our dreamer's astonishing genius. Let us take our stand before this heaving canvas, then, till we have taken attentive note of some of John Bunyan's inimitable touches and strokes and triumphs of truth and art. 'One in very pleasant attire, but old. . . . This woman is a witch. . . . I am the mistress of the world, she said, and men are made happy by me. . . . A tall, comely dame, something of a swarthy complexion.' In the newly discovered portrait of a woman, by Albert Dürer, one of the marks of its genuineness is the way that the great artist's initials A. D. are pencilled in on the embroidery of the lady's bodice. And you will note in this gentlewoman's open dress also how J. B. is inextricably woven in. 'She wears a great purse by her side also, and her hand is often in her purse fingering her money. Yea, this is she that has bought off many a man from a pilgrim's life after he had fairly begun it. She is a bold and an impudent slut also, for she will talk with any man. If there be one cunning to make money in any place, she will speak well of him from house to house. . . . She has given it out in some places also that she is a goddess, and therefore some do actually worship her. . . . She has her times and open places of cheating, and she will say and avow it that none can show a good comparable to hers. And thus she has brought many to the halter, and ten thousand times more to hell. None can tell of

the mischief that she does. She makes variance betwixt rulers and subjects, betwixt parents and children, 'twixt neighbour and neighbour, 'twixt a man and his wife, 'twixt a man and himself, 'twixt the flesh and the heart.' And so on in the great original. 'Had she stood by all this while,' said Standfast, whose eyes were still full of her, 'you could not have set Madam Bubble more amply before me, nor have better described her features.' 'He that drew her picture was a good limner,' said Mr. Honest, 'and he that so wrote of her said true.'

1. 'I am the mistress of this world,' says Madam Bubble. And though all the time she is a bold and impudent slut, yet it is the simple truth that she does sit as a queen over this world and over the men of this world. For Madam Bubble has a royal family like all other sovereigns. She has a court of her own, too, with its ball-room presentations and its birthday honours. She has a cabinet council also, and a bar and a bench with their pleadings and their decisions. Far more than all that, she has a church which she has established and of which she is the head; and a faith also of which she is the defender. She has a standing army also for the extension and the protection of her dominions. She levies taxes, too, and sends out ambassadors, and makes treaties, and forms offensive and defensive alliances. But what a bubble all this World is to him whose eyes have at last been opened to see the hollowness and the heartlessness of it all! For all its pursuits and all its possessions, from a child's rattle to a king's sceptre, all is one great bubble. Wealth, fame, place, power; art, science, letters;

politics, churches, sacraments, and scriptures—all are so many bubbles in Madam Bubble's World. This wicked enchantress, if she does not find all these things bubbles already, by one touch of her evil wand she makes them so. She turns gold into dross, God into an idle name, and His Word into words only; unless when in her malice she turns it into a fruitful ground of debate and contention; a ground of malice and hatred and ill-will. Vanity of vanities; all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Still, she sits a queen and a goddess to a great multitude: to all men, to begin with. And, like a goddess, she sheds abroad her spirit in her people's hearts and lifts up upon them for a time the light of her countenance.

2. 'I am the mistress of the world,' she says, 'and men are made happy by me.'—I would like to see one of them. I have seen many men to whom Madam Bubble had said that if they would be ruled by her she would make them great and happy. But though I have seen not a few who have believed her and let themselves be ruled by her, I have never yet seen one happy man among them.—The truth is, Madam Bubble is not able to make men happy even if she wished to do it. She is not happy herself, and she cannot dispense to others what she does not possess. And, yet, such are her sorceries that, while her old dupes die in thousands every day, new dupes are born to her every day in still greater numbers. New dupes who run to the same excess of folly with her that their fathers ran; new dupes led in the same mad dance after Madam Bubble and her three daughters. But, always, and to all men, what a bubble both the

mother and all her daughters are! How they all make promises like their lying mother, and how, like her, they all lead men, if not to the halter and to hell, as Great-heart said, yet to a life of vanity and to a death of disappointment and despair! What bubbles of empty hopes both she and her three children blow up in the brains of men! What pictures of untold happiness they paint in the imaginations of men! What pleasures, what successes in life, what honours and what rewards she pledges herself to see bestowed! 'She has her times and open places of cheating,' said one who knew her and all her ways well. And when men and women are still young and inexperienced, that is one of her great cheating times. At some seasons of the year, and in some waters, to the fisherman's surprise and confusion, the fish will sometimes take his bare hook; a bit of a red rag is a deadly bait. And Madam Bubble's poorest and most perfunctory busking is quite enough for the foolish fish she angles for. And not in our salad days only, when we are still green in judgment, but even to grey hairs, this wicked witch continues to entrap us to our ruin. Love, in all its phases and in all its mixtures, first deludes the very young; and then place, and power, and fame, and money are the bait she busks for the middle-aged and the old; and always with the same bubble end. The whole truth is that without God, the living and ever-present God, in all ages of it and in all parts and experiences of it, our human life is one huge bubble. A far-shining, high-soaring bubble; but sooner or later seen and tasted to be a bubble—a deceit-filled,

poison-filled bubble.—Happy by her! All men happy by her! The impudent slut!

3. Another thing about this slut is this, that 'she will talk with any man.' She makes up to us and makes eyes at us just as if we were free to accept and return her three offers. And still she talks to us and offers us the same things she offered to Standfast till, to escape her and her offers, he betook himself to his knees. Nay, truth to tell, after she had deceived us and ensnared us till we lay in her net cursing both her and ourselves, so bold and so impudent and so persistent is this temptress slut, and such fools and idiots are we, that we soon lay our eyes on her painted beauty again and our heads in her loathsome lap; our heads on that block over which the axe hangs by an angry hair. 'She will talk with any man.' No doubt; but, then, it takes two to make a talk, and the sad thing is that there are few men among us so wise, so steadfast, and so experienced in her ways that they will not on occasion let Madam Bubble talk her talk to them, and talk back again to her. The oldest saint, the oftenest sold and most dearly redeemed sinner, needs to suspect himself to the end, till he is clear out of Madam Bubble's enchanted ground and for ever over that river of deliverance which shall sweep Madam Bubble and all her daughters into the dead sea for ever.

> 'The grey-haired saint may fail at last,
> The surest guide a wanderer prove;
> Death only binds us fast
> To the bright shore of love.'

4. 'She highly commends the rich,' the guide

goes on about Madam Bubble, 'and if there be one cunning to get money in any place she will speak well of him from house to house.' 'The world,' says Faber, 'is not altogether matter, nor yet altogether spirit. It is not man only, nor Satan only, nor is it exactly sin. It is an infection, an inspiration, an atmosphere, a life, a colouring matter, a pageantry, a fashion, a taste, a witchery. None of all these names suit it, and all of them suit it. Meanwhile its power over the human creation is terrific, its presence ubiquitous, its deceittulness incredible. It can find a home under every heart beneath the poles. It is wider than the catholic church, and it is masterful, lawless, and intrusive within it. We are all living in it, breathing it, acting under its influence, being cheated by its appearances, and unwarily admitting its principles.' Let young ministers who wish to preach to their people on the World—after studying what the Preacher, and the Saviour, and John, and John Bunyan say about the World,—still read Faber's powerful chapter in his *Creator and Creature.* Yes; Madam Bubble finds a home for herself in every heart beneath the poles. The truth is Madam Bubble has no home, as she has no existence, but in human hearts. And all that Solomon, and our Saviour, and John, and John Bunyan, and Frederick Faber say about the world and about Madam Bubble they really say about the heart of man. It is we, you and I, my brethren, who so highly commend the rich. It is we ourselves here who speak well from house to house of him whose father or whose self has been cunning to

get money. We either speak well or ill of them. We either are sick with envy at them, or we fawn upon them and fall down before them. How men rise in our esteem in the degree that their money increases! With what reverence and holy awe we look up at them as if they were gods and the sons of gods! They become more than mortal men to our reverent imaginations. How happy, how all but blessed they must be! we say to ourselves. Within those park gates, under those high towers, in that silver-mounted carriage, surrounded with all those liveried servants, and loved and honoured by all those arriving and leaving guests—what happiness that rich man must have! We are either eaten up of lean-eyed envy of this and that rich man, or we positively worship them as other men worship God and His saints. Yes; Madam Bubble is our very mother. She conceived us and she suckled us. We were brought up in her nurture and admonition. We learned her Catechism, and her shrine is in our heart to-night. Like her, if only a pilgrim is poor, we scorn him. We will not know him. But if there be any one, pilgrim or no, cunning to get money, we honour him, and we claim him as our kindred and relation, our acquaintance and our friend. We will speak often of him as such from house to house. Just see if we will not. There is room in our hearts, Madam Bubble, there is room in our hearts for thee!

5. 'She loves them most that think best of her.' But, surely, surely, the guide goes quite too far in blaming and being hard upon poor Madam Bubble for that? For, to give her fair play, she is not at

all alone in that. Is the guide himself wholly above that? Do we not all do that? Is there one in ten, is there one in a thousand, who hates and humiliates himself because his love of men and women goes up or down just as they think of him? Yes; Great-heart is true to his great name in his whole portrait of Madam Bubble also, and nowhere more true than in this present feature. For when any man comes to have any true greatness in his heart—how he despises and detests himself as he finds himself out in not only claiming kindred and acquaintance with the rich and despising and denying the poor; but, still more, in loving or hating other men just as they love or hate him! The world loves her own. Yes; but he who has been taken out of the world, and who has had the world taken out of him, he loves—he strives to love, he goes to his knees every day he lives to love—those who not only do not think well of him, but who both think ill of him and speak ill of him. 'Humility,' says William Law, 'does not consist in having a worse opinion of ourselves than we deserve, or in abasing ourselves lower than we really are. But as all virtue is founded in truth, so humility is founded in a true and just sense of our weakness, misery, and sin. He who rightly feels and lives in this sense of his condition lives in humility. And, it may be added, when our hearts are wholly clothed with humility we shall be prompt to approve the judgment and to endorse the sentence of those who think and speak the least good of us and the most evil.

6. ''Twas she,' so the guide at last wound up,

'that set Absalom against his father, and Jeroboam against his master. 'Twas she that persuaded Judas to sell his Lord, and that prevailed with Demas to forsake the godly pilgrim's life. None can tell all the mischief that Madam Bubble does. She makes variance between rulers and subjects, between parents and children, 'twixt neighbour and neighbour, 'twixt a man and his wife, 'twixt a man and himself, 'twixt the flesh and the heart.' Now, I shall leave that last indictment and its lessons and its applications to yourselves, my brethren. You will get far more good out of this accumulated count against Madam Bubble if you explain it, and open it up, and prove it, and illustrate it to yourselves. Explain, then, in what way this sorceress set Absalom against his father and Jeroboam against his master. Point out in what way she makes variance between a ruler and his subjects, and give illustrations. Put your finger on a parent and on a child between whom there is variance at this moment on her account. And, if you are that parent or that child, what have you done to remove that variance? Name two neighbours that to your knowledge Madam Bubble has come between; and say what you have done to be a peacemaker there. Set down what you would say to a man and his wife so as to put them on their guard against Madam Bubble ever coming in between them. And, last and best of all, point out to yourself at what times and in what ways this wicked witch tries to make variance between God's Holy Spirit striving within you and your own evil heart still strong within you. When you are

weary and sleepy and hungry as a howlet, and Madam Bubble and her three daughters make a ring round you, what do you do? Do you ever take to your knees? Really and honestly, do you? When you find yourself out looking with holy fear on a rich and lofty relation, and with insufferable contempt on a poor and intrusive relation, by what name do you call yourself? Write it down. And when she would fain put variance between you and those who do not think well of you, what steps do you take to foil her? Where and how do you get strength at that supreme moment to think of others as you would have them think of you? 'Oh,' said Standfast, 'what a mercy it is that I did resist her! for to what might she not have drawn me?'

XLVII

GAIUS

'Gaius, mine host.'—*Paul.*

OODMAN GAIUS was the head of a hostel that stood on the side of the highway well on to the Celestial City. The hostess of the hostel was no more, and the old hostel-keeper did all her once well-done work and his own proper work into the bargain. Every day he inspected the whole house with his own eyes, down even to the kitchen and the scullery. The good woman had left our host an only daughter; but, 'Keep her as much out of sight as is possible,' she said, and so fell asleep. And Gaius remembered his wife's last testament every day, till none of the hostel customers knew that there was so much as a young hostess in all the house. 'Yes, gentlemen,' replied the old innkeeper. 'Yes, come in. It is late, but I take you for true men, for you must know that my house is kept open only for such.' So he took the large pilgrim party to their several apartments with his own eyes, and then set about a supper for those so late arrivals. Stamping with his foot, he brought up the cook with the euphonious and eupeptic name, and that quick-witted domestic soon had a supper on the

table that would have made a full man's mouth water. 'The sight of all this,' said Matthew, as the under-cook laid the cloth and the trenchers, and set the salt and the bread in order—'the sight of this cloth and of this forerunner of a supper begetteth in me a greater appetite to my food than I thought I had before.' So supper came up; and first a heave-shoulder and a wave-breast were set on the table before them, in order to show that they must begin their meal with prayer and praise to God. These two dishes were very fresh and good, and all the travellers did eat heartily well thereof. The next was a bottle of wine red as blood. So Gaius said to them, 'Drink freely; this is the juice of the true vine that makes glad the heart of God and man.' And they did drink and were very merry. The next was a dish of milk well crumbed. At the sight of which Gaius said, 'Let the boys have that, that they may grow thereby.' And so on, dish after dish, till the nuts came with the recitations and the riddles and the saws and the stories over the nuts. Thus the happy party sat talking till the break of day.

1. Now, it is natural to remark that the first thing about a host is his hospitality. And that, too, whether our host is but the head of a hostel like Goodman Gaius, or the head of a well-appointed private house like Gaius's neighbour, Mr. Mnason. The first and the last thing about a host is his hospitality. 'Say little and do much' is the example and the injunction to all our housekeepers that Rabban Shammai draws out of the eighteenth of Genesis. 'Be like your father Abraham,' he says,

'on the plains of Mamre, who only promised bread and water, but straightway set Sarah to knead three measures of her finest meal, while he ran to the herd and fetched a calf tender and good, and stood by the three men while they did eat butter and milk under the tree. Make thy Thorah an ordinance: say little and do much: and receive every man with a pleasant expression of countenance.' Now, this was exactly what Gaius our goodman did that night, with one exception, which we shall be constrained to attend to afterwards. 'It is late,' he said, 'so we cannot conveniently go out to seek food; but such as we have you shall be welcome to, if that will content.' At the same time Taste-that-which-is-good soon had a supper sent up to the table fit for a prince: a supper of six courses at that time in the morning, so that the sun was already in the sky when Old Honest closed his casement.

'Dining in company is a divine institution,' says Mr. Edward White, in his delightful *Minor Moralities of Life*. 'Let Soyer's art be honoured among all men,' he goes on. 'Cookery distinguishes mankind from the beasts that perish. Happy is the woman whose daily table is the result of forethought. Her husband shall rise up and call her blessed. It is piteous when the culinary art is neglected in our young women's education. Let them, as St. Peter says, imitate Sarah. Let them see how that venerable princess went quickly to her kneading-trough and oven and prepared an extempore collation of cakes and pilau for the angels. How few ladies, whether Gentiles or Jewesses, could do the like in the present day!'

2. The wistful and punctilious attention that Goodman Gaius paid to each individual guest of his was a fine feature in his munificent hospitality. He made every one who crossed his doorstep, down even to Mr. Fearing, feel at once at home, such was his exquisite as well as his munificent hospitality. 'Come, sir,' he said, clapping that white-faced and trembling pilgrim on the shoulder, 'come, sir, be of good cheer, you are welcome to me and to my house; and what thou hast a mind to, that call for freely: for what thou wouldst have my servants will do for thee, and they will do it for thee with a ready mind.' All the same, for a long time Mr. Fearing was mortally afraid of the servants. He would as soon have thought of stamping his foot for a duchess to come up as for any of Gaius's serving-maids He was afraid to make any noise in his room lest all the house should hear it. He was afraid to touch anything in the room lest it should fall and be broken. We ourselves, with all our assumed ease and elaborate abandon, are often afraid to ring our bell even in an inn. Mr. Fearing would as soon have pulled the tail of a rattlesnake. But before their sojourn was over, the Guide was amazed at Mr. Fearing, for that hare-hearted pilgrim would be doing things in the house that he himself would scarcely do who had been in the house a thousand times. It was Gaius's exuberant heartiness that had demoralised Mr. Fearing and made him almost too forward even for a wayside inn. In little things also Gaius, mine host, showed his sensitive and solicitous hospitality. We all know housekeepers, not to say innkeepers, and not otherwise ungenerous housekeepers either who

will grudge us a sixpennyworth of sticks and coals in a cold night, and that, too, in a room furnished to overflowing by Morton Brothers or the Messrs. Maple. We take a candlestick and a dozen candles with us in the boot of the carriage when we wish to read or write late into the night in that great house. Another housekeeper, who would give you her only daughter with her wealthy dowry, will sometimes be seen by all in her house to grudge you a fresh cup of afternoon tea when you drop in to see her and her daughter. She says to herself that it is to spare the servants the stairs; but, all the time, under the stairs, the servants are blushing for the sometimes unaccountable stinginess of their unusually munificent mistress. I shall give you 'line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little' of Aristotle upon munificence in little things till you come up to his pagan standard. 'There is a real greatness,' he says, 'even in the way that some men will buy a toy to a child. Even in the smallest matters the munificent man will act munificently!' As Gaius, mine host, munificently did.

3. Speaking of children, what a night of entertainment good old Gaius gave the children of the pilgrim party! 'Let the boys have the crumbed milk,' he gave orders. 'Butter and honey shall they eat,' he exclaimed over them as that brimming dish came up. 'This was our Lord's dish when He was a child,' he said to the mother of the boys, 'that He might know to refuse the evil and to choose the good.' Then they brought up a dish of apples, and they were very good-tasted fruit. Then

said Matthew, 'May we eat apples, since they were such by and with which the serpent beguiled our first mother?' Then said Gaius,

> 'Apples were they by which we were beguiled,
> Yet sin, not apples, hath our souls defiled.
> Apples forbid, if eat, corrupt the blood.
> To eat such, when commanded, does us good.
> Drink of His flagons then, thou Church, His Dove,
> And eat His apples who are sick of love.'

Then said Matthew, 'I make the scruple because I awhile since was sick with eating of fruit.' 'Forbidden fruit,' said the host, 'will make you sick, but not what our Lord hath tolerated.' While they were thus talking they were presented with another dish, and it was a dish of nuts. Then said some at the table, 'Nuts spoil tender teeth, especially the teeth of children,' which when Gaius heard, he said,

> 'Hard texts are nuts (I will not call them cheaters)
> Whose shells do keep their kernels from the eaters;
> Ope then the shells and you shall have the meat;
> They here are brought for you to crack and eat.'

Then Samuel whispered to his mother and said, 'Mother, this is a very good man's house; let us stay here a good while before we go any farther.' The which Gaius the host overhearing, said, 'With a very good will, my child.'

4. Widower as old Gaius was, and never for a single hour forgot that he was, there was a certain sweet and stately gallantry awakened in his withered old heart at the sight of Christiana and Mercy, and especially at the sight of Matthew and Mercy when they were seen together. He seems to have fallen almost in love with that aged matron, as he called her, and the days of his youth came back to him as

he studied the young damsel, who was to her as a daughter. And this set the loquacious old inn-keeper upon that famous oration about women which every man who has a mother, or a wife, or a sister, or a daughter has by heart. And from that he went on to discourse on the great advantages of an early marriage. He was not the man, nor was he speaking to a mother who was the woman, ever to become a vulgar and coarse-minded match-maker; at the same time, he liked to see Matthew and Mercy sent out on a message together, leaving it to nature and to grace to do the rest. The pros and cons of early marriage were often up at his hearty table, but he always debated, and Gaius was a great debater, that true hospitality largely consisted in throwing open the family circle to let young people get well acquainted with one another in its peace and sweetness. And Gaius both practised what he preached, and at the same time endorsed his watchful wife's last testament, when he gave his daughter Phebe to James, Christiana's second son, and thus was left alone, poor old Gaius, when the happy honeymoon party started upward from his hostel door.

5. Their next host was one Mr. Mnason, a Cyprusian by nation, and an old disciple. 'How far have you come to-day?' he asked. 'From the house of Gaius our friend,' they said. 'I promise you,' said he, 'you have gone a good stitch; you may well be weary; sit down.' So they sat down. 'Our great want a while since,' said Old Honest, 'was harbour and good company, and now I hope we have both.' 'For harbour,' said the host, 'you see

what it is, but for good company that will appear in the trial.' After they were a little rested Old Honest again asked his host if there were any store of good people in that town; and, 'How,' he said, 'shall we do to see some of them? For the sight of good men to them that are going on pilgrimage is like to the appearing of the moon and stars to them that are sailing upon the seas.' Then Mr. Mnason stamped with his foot and his daughter Grace came up, when he sent her out for five of his friends in the town, saying that he had a guest or two in his house at present to whom he would like to introduce them.

Now, this is another of the good qualities of a good host, to know the best and the most suitable people in the town, and to be on such terms with them that on short notice they will step across to help to entertain such travellers as had come to Mr. Mnason's table. And it is an excellent thing to be sure that when we are so invited we shall not only get a good dinner, but also, as good 'kitchen' with our dinner, good company and good conversation. It is nothing short of a fine art to gather together and to seat suitably beside one another good and suitable people as Mr. and Miss Mnason did in their hospitable house that afternoon. And then, as to the talk: let the host and the hostess introduce the guests, and then let the guests introduce their own topics. And as far as possible, in a city and a day like this, let our topics be books rather than people. And let the books be the books that the guests have read rather than those that the host and the hostess have read. Books

are a fine subject for a talk at table. Only, let great readers order their learned and literary talk so as not to lead the less learned into temptation. There is no finer exercise of fine feeling than to be able to carry on a conversation about matters that other people present are ignorant of, and at the same time to interest them, to set them at ease, and to make them forget both you and themselves. I had a letter the other day from an English Church clergyman, in which he tells me that his bishop is coming this month to his vicarage for a kind of visitation and retreat, and that they are to have William Law's *Characters and Characteristics* read aloud to them when the bishop and the assembled clergy are at their meals. For my part, I would rather hear a good all-round talk on that book by the bishop and his clergy after they had all read the book over and over again at home. But such readings at assembled meals have all along been a feature of the best fraternal life in the Church of England and in some of the sister churches.

6. Now, after dining and supping repeatedly with garrulous old Gaius, and with the all-but-silent Mr. Mnason, I have come home ruminating again and again on this—that a good host, the best host, lets his guests talk while he attends to the table. If the truth may even be whispered to one's-self about a table that one has just left, Gaius did his best to spoil his good supper by his own over-garrulity. It was good talk that he entertained his waiting guests with, but we may have too much of a good thing. His oration in praise of women was an excellent oration, had it been delivered in

another house than his own; and, say, when he was asked to give the health of Christiana, or of Matthew the bridegroom and Mercy the bride, it would then have been perfect; but not in his own house, and not when his guests were waiting for their supper. On the other hand, you should have seen that perfect gentleman, Mr. Mnason. For that true old Christian and old English gentleman never once opened his mouth after he had set his guests a-talking. He was too busy watching when any man's dish was again empty. He was too much delighted to see that every one of his guests was having his punctual share of the supper, and at the same time his full share of the talk. Mr. Fearing's small voice was far more pleasant to Mr. Mnason than his own voice was in his own best story. As I opened my own door the other night after supping with Mr. and Miss Mnason, I said to myself—One thing I have again seen and learned to-night, and that is, that a host, and still more a hostess, should talk less at their own table than their most silent, most bashful, and most backward guest. 'Make this an ordinance for thee,' said Rabban Shammai to his sons in the law; 'receive all thy guests with a pleasant expression of countenance, and then say little and do much.'

XLVIII

CHRISTIAN

'The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.'—*Luke.*

'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.'—*King Agrippa.*

'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'—*Paul.*

LL the other personages in the *Pilgrim's Progress* come and go; they all ascend the stage for a longer or shorter time, and then pass off the stage and so pass out of our sight; but Christian in the First Part, and Christiana in the Second Part, are never for a single moment out of our sight. And, accordingly, we have had repeated occasion and opportunity to learn many excellent lessons from the chief pilgrim's upward walk and heavenly conversation. But so full and so rich are his life and his character, that some very important things still remain to be collected before we finally close his history. 'Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost,' said our Lord, after His miraculous meal of multiplied loaves and fishes with His disciples. And in like manner I shall now proceed to gather up some of the remaining fragments of Christian's life and character and experience. And I shall collect these fragments into the

three baskets of his book, his burden, and his sealed roll and certificate.

1. And first, a few things as to his book. 'As I slept I dreamed, and behold I saw a man clothed in rags standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked and saw him open the book and read therein; and as he read he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to contain he broke out with a lamentable cry, saying, What shall I do?' We hear a great deal in these advertising days, and not one word too much, about the books that have influenced and gone largely to the making of our great men; but Graceless, like John Bunyan, his biographer, was a man of but one book. But, then, that book was the most influential of all books; it was the Book of books; it was God's very own and peculiar Book. And those of us who, like this man, have passed out of a graceless into a gracious state will for ever remember how that same Book at that time influenced us till it made us what we are and shall yet be. We read many other good books at that epoch in our life, but it was the pure Bible that we read and prayed over out of sight the most. We needed no commentators or exegetes on our simple Bible in those days. The great texts stood out to our eyes in those days as if they had been written with a sunbeam; while all other books (and we read nothing but the best books in those days) looked like twilight and rushlight beside our Bible. In those immediate, direct, and intense days we would have satisfied Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold themselves in the way we read our

Bible with our eye never off the object. The Four Last Things were ever before us—death and judgment, heaven and hell. 'O my dear wife,' said Graceless, 'and you the children of my bowels, I your dear friend am in myself undone by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me; moreover, I am for certain informed that this our city will be burned with fire from heaven, in which fearful overthrow both myself, with thee my wife, and you my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruin, except (the which yet I see not) some way of escape can be found whereby we may be delivered.' He would walk also solitarily in the fields, sometimes reading and sometimes praying; and thus for some days he spent his time. Graceless at that time and at that stage would have satisfied the exigent author of the *Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection* where he says that 'we are too apt also to think that we have sufficiently read a book when we have so read it as to know what it contains. This reading may be quite sufficient as to many books; but as to the Bible we are not to think that we have read it enough because we have often read and heard what it teaches. We must read our Bible, not to know what it contains, but to fill our hearts with the spirit of it.' And, again, and on this same point, 'There is this unerring key to the right use of the Bible. The Bible has only one intent, and that is to make a man know, resist, and abhor the working of his fallen earthly nature, and to turn the faith, hope, and longing desire of his heart to God; and therefore we are only to read our Bibles with this view and to learn this one lesson from it. . . . The

critic looks into his books to see how Latin and Greek authors have used the words 'stranger' and 'pilgrim,' but the Christian, who knows that man lives in labour and toil, in sickness and pain, in hunger and thirst, in heat and cold among the beasts of the field, where evil spirits like roaring lions seek to devour him—he only knows in what truth and reality man is a poor stranger and a distressed pilgrim upon the earth.' John Bunyan read neither Plato nor Aristotle, but he read David and Paul till he was the chief of sinners, and till he was first the Graceless and then the Christian of his own next-to-the-Bible book.

2. In the second place, and as to his burden. We are supplied with no particulars as to the first beginnings, the gradual make-up, and at last the terrible size of Christian's burden. What this pilgrim's youthful life must have been in such a city as his native city was, and while he was still a young man of such a name and such a character in such a city, we are left to ourselves to think and consider. Graceless was his name by nature, and his life was as his name and his nature were. Still, as I have said, we have no detailed and particular account of his early life when his burden was still day and night in the making up. How long into your life were you graceless, my brother? And what kind of life did you lead day and night before you were persuaded or alarmed, as the case may have been with you, into being a Christian? What burdens do you carry on your broken back to this day that were made up in the daylight or in the darkness by your own hands in your early

days? Were you early or were you too late in your conversion? Or are you truly converted to God and to salvation even yet? And are you at this moment still binding a burden on your back that you shall never lay down on this side your grave—it may be, not on this side your burning bed in hell? Ask yourselves all that before God and before your own conscience, and make yourselves absolutely sure that God at any rate is not mocked; and, therefore that you, too, shall in the end reap exactly as you from the beginning have sown. 'How camest thou by thy burden at first?' asked Mr. Worldly-Wiseman at the trembling pilgrim. 'By reading this book in my hand,' he answered. And, in the long run, it is always the Bible that best creates a sinner's burden, binds it on his back, and makes it so terribly heavy to bear. Fear of death and judgment will sometimes make up and bind on a sinner's burden; and sometimes the fear of man's judgment on this side of death will do it. Fear of being found out in some cases will make a man's secret sin far too heavy for him to bear. The throne of public opinion is not a very white throne; at the same time, it is a coarse forecast and a rough foretaste of the last judgment; and the fear of it not seldom makes a man's burden simply intolerable to him. Sometimes a great sinner's burden leads him to flight and outlawry; sometimes to madness and self-murder; and sometimes, by the timeous and sufficient grace of God, to the way of escape that our pilgrim took. Tenderness of conscience, also, simple softness of heart and conscience, will sometimes make a terrible burden

out of what other men would call a very light matter. Bind a burden on that iron pillar standing there, and it will feel nothing and say nothing. But, bind the same burden on that man in whose seat that dead pillar takes up a sitter's room, and he will make all that are in the house hear his sighs and his groans. And lay an act of sin—an evil word or evil work or evil thought—on one man among us, and he will walk about the streets with as erect a head and as smiling a countenance and as light a step as if he were an innocent child; while, lay half as much on his neighbour, and it will so bruise him to the earth that all men will take knowledge of him that he is a miserable man. Our Lord could no doubt have carried His cross from the hall of judgment to the hill-top without help had His back not been wet with blood. What with a whole and an unwealed body, a well-rested and well-nourished body, He could easily have carried, with His broken body and broken heart He quite sank under. And so it is with His people. One of His heart-broken, heart-bleeding people will sink down to death and hell under a burden of sin and corruption that another of them will scarcely feel or know or believe that it is there. Some sins again in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are far more heavy to bear than others, and by some sinners than others. I was reading Bishop Andrewes to myself last night and came upon this pertinent passage. 'Sin: its measure, its harm, its scandal. Its quality: how often—how long. The person by whom: his age, condition, state, enlightenment.

Its manner, motive, time, and place. The folly of it, the ingratitude of it, the hardness of it, the presumptuousness of it. By heart, by mouth, by deed. Against God, my neighbours, my own body. By knowledge, by ignorance. Willingly and unwillingly. Of old and of late. In boyhood and youth, in mature and old age. Things done once, repeated often, hidden and open. Things done in anger, and from the lust of the flesh and of the world. Before and after my call. Asleep by night and awake by day. Things remembered and things forgotten. Through the fiery darts of the enemy, through the unclean desires of the flesh—I have sinned against Thee. Have mercy on me, O God, and forgive me!' That is the way some men's burdens are made up to such gigantic proportions and then bound on by such acute cords. That is the way that Lancelot Andrewes and John Bunyan walked solitarily in the fields, sometimes reading and sometimes praying, till the one of them put himself into his immortal *Devotions*, and the other into his immortal *Grace Abounding* and *Pilgrim's Progress*.

'Then I saw in my dream that Christian asked the Gate-keeper further if he could not help him off with his burden that was upon his back, for as yet he had not got rid of it, nor could he by any means get it off without help. He told him, "As to thy burden, be content to bear it until thou comest to the place of deliverance, for there it will fall from off thy back itself." Now I saw in my dream that the highway up which Christian was to go was fenced on either side with a wall, and that wall is Salvation.

Up this way, therefore, did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back. He ran thus till he came to a place somewhat ascending, and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below in the bottom a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up with the cross his burden loosed from off his back, and began to tumble and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, "He hath given me rest by His sorrow, and life by His death!"'

'Blest Cross! blest Sepulchre! Blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me.'

But, then, how it could be that this so happy man was scarcely a stone-cast past the cross when he had begun again to burden himself with fresh sin, and thus to disinter all his former sin? How a true pilgrim comes to have so many burdens to bear, and that till he ceases to be any longer a pilgrim,—a burden of guilt, a burden of corruption, and a burden of bare creaturehood,—I must leave all that, and all the questions connected with all that, for you all to think out and work out for yourselves; and you will not say any morning on this earth, like Mrs. Timorous, that you have little to do.

3. The third of the three Shining Ones who saluted Christian at the cross set a mark on his forehead, and put a roll with a seal set upon it into his hand. A roll and a seal which he bid him look on as he ran, and that he should give that roll in at the Celestial Gate. Bunyan does not in all places

come up to his usual clearness in what he says about the sealed roll. We must believe that he understood his own meaning and intention in all that he says, first and last, about the roll, but he has not always made his meaning clear, at least to one of his readers. Theological students, and, indeed, all thoughtful Christian men, are invited to read Dr. Cunningham's powerful paper on Assurance in his *Reformers*. The whole literature of Assurance is there taken up and weighed and sifted with all that great writer's incomparable learning and power and judgment. Our Larger Catechism, also, is excellent on this subject; and this subject is a favourite commonplace with all our best Calvinistic, Puritan, and Evangelical authors. Let us take two or three passages out of those authors just as a specimen, and so close.

'Can true believers'—Larger Catechism, *Question* 80—'Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in an estate of grace, and that they shall persevere therein to the end? *Answer:* Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavour to walk in all good conscience before Him may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promise, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of eternal life are made, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, they may be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.' *Question* 81: 'Are all true believers at all times assured of their present being in a state of grace, and that they shall be saved? *Answer:*

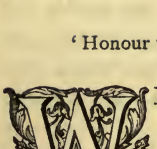
Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it, and, after the enjoyment thereof, may have it weakened and intermitted through manifold distempers, sins, temptations, and desertions; yet are they never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair.' 'A Christian's assurance,' says Fraser of Brea, 'though it does not firstly flow from his holiness, yet is ever after proportionable to his holy walking. Faith is kept in a pure conscience. Sin is like a blot of ink fallen upon our evidence. This I found to be a truth.' 'It was the speech of one to me,' says Thomas Shepard of New England, 'next to the donation of Christ, no mercy like this, to deny assurance long; and why? For if the Lord had not, I should have given way to a loose heart and life. And this is a rule I have long held—long denial of assurance is like fire to burn out some sin and then the Lord will speak peace.' 'Serve your God day and night faithfully,' says Dr. Goodwin. 'Walk humbly; and there is a promise of the Holy Ghost to come and fill your hearts with joy unspeakable and glorious to rear you up to the day of redemption. Sue this promise out, wait for it, rest not in believing only, rest not in assurance by graces only; there is a further assurance to be had.' 'I would not give a straw for that assurance,' says John Newton, 'which sin will not damp If David had come from his adultery and still have talked of his assurance, I should have despised his speech.' 'When we want the faith of assurance,'

says Matthew Henry, 'let us live by the faith of adherence.' And then the whole truth is in a nutshell in Isaiah and in John: 'The effect of righteousness shall be quietness and assurance for ever,' and 'My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we shall know that we are of the truth, and so shall assure our hearts before Him.'

XLIX

CHRISTIANA

'Honour widows that are widows indeed.'—*Paul.*



E know next to nothing of Christiana till after she is a widow indeed. The names of her parents, and what kind of parents they were, the schools and the boarding-schools to which they sent their daughter, her school companions, the books she read, if she ever read any books at all, the amusements she was indulged in and indulged herself in—on all that her otherwise full and minute biographer is wholly silent. He does not go back beyond her married life; he does not even go back to the beginning of that. The only thing we are sure of about Christiana's early days is that she was an utterly ungodly woman and that she married an utterly ungodly man. 'Have you a family? Are you a married man?' asked Charity of Christian in the House Beautiful. 'I have a wife and four small children,' he replied. 'And why did you not bring them along with you?' Then Christian wept, and said: 'Oh, how willingly would I have done it; but they were all utterly averse to my going on pilgrimage.' 'But you should have talked to them,' said Charity, 'and have endeavoured to have shown them the danger

of being behind.' 'So I did,' answered Christian. 'And did you pray to God that He would bless your counsel to them?' 'Yes, and with much affection; for you must think that my wife and poor children were very dear unto me.' 'But what could they say for themselves why they came not?' 'Why, my wife was afraid of losing the world, and my children were given over to the foolish delights of youth; so what with one thing and what with another, they left me to wander in this manner alone.'

But what her husband's conversion, good example, and most earnest entreaties could not all do for his worldly wife, that his sudden death speedily did. And thus it is that both Christiana's best life, all our interest in her, and all our information about her, dates, sad to say, not from her espousal, nor from her marriage day, nor from any part of her married life, but from her husband's death. Her maidenhood has no interest for us; all our interest is fixed on her widowhood. This work of fiction now in our hands begins where all other works of fiction end; for in the life of religion, you must know, our best is always before us. Well, scarcely was her husband dead when Christiana began to accuse herself of having killed him. To take her own bitter words for it, the most agonising and remorseful thoughts about her conduct to her husband stung her heart like so many wasps. Ah, yes! A wasp's sting is but a blade of innocent grass compared with the thoughts that have stung us all as we recalled what we said and did to those who are now no more. There are graves in the church-

yard we dare not go near. 'I have sinned away your father!' she cried, as she threw herself on the earth at the feet of her astounded children. 'I have sinned away your father and he is gone!' And yet there was no mark of a bullet and no gash of a knife on his dead body, and no chemistry could have extracted one grain of arsenic or of strychnine out of his blood. But there are many ways of taking a man's life besides those of poison or a knife or a gunshot. Constant fault-finding, constant correction and studied contempt before strangers, total want of sympathy and encouragement, gloomy looks, rough remarks, all blame and never a word of praise, things like these between man and wife will kill as silently and as surely as poison or suffocation. Look at home, my brethren, and ask yourselves what you will think of much of your present conduct when it has borne its proper fruit. 'Upon this came into her mind by swarms all her unkind, unnatural, and ungodly carriages to her dear friend, which also clogged her conscience and did load her with guilt. It all returned upon her like a flash of lightning, and rent the caul of her heart asunder.' 'That which troubleth me most,' she would cry out, 'is my churlish carriages to him when he was under distress. I am that woman,' she would cry out and would not be appeased—'I am that woman that was so hard-hearted as to slight my husband's troubles, and that left him to go on his journey alone. How like a churl I carried myself to him in all that! And so guilt took hold of my mind,' she said to the Interpreter, 'and would have drawn me to the pond!'

A minister's widow once told me that she had gone home after hearing a sermon of mine on the text, 'What profit is there in my blood?' and had destroyed a paper of poison she had purchased in her despair on the previous Saturday night. It was not a sermon from her unconscious minister, but it was far better; it was a conversation that Christiana held with her four boys that fairly and for ever put all thought of the pond out of their mother's remorseful mind. 'So Christiana,' as we read in the opening of her history—'so Christiana called her sons together and began thus to address herself unto them: My sons, I have, as you may perceive, been of late under much exercise in my soul about the death of your father. My carriages to your father in his distress are a great load on my conscience. Come, my children, let us pack up and be gone to the gate, that we may see your father and be with him, according to the laws of that land.' I like that passage, I think, the best in all Christiana's delightful history—that passage which begins with these words: 'So she called her children together.' For when she called her children together she opened to them both her heart and her conscience; and from that day there was but one heart and one conscience in all that happy house. I was walking alone on a country road the other day, and as I was walking I was thinking about my pastoral work and about my people and their children, when all at once I met one of my people. My second sentence to him was: 'This very moment I was thinking about your sons. How are they getting on?' He quite well understood me. He knew that I was not

indifferent as to how they were getting on in business, but he knew that I was alluding more to the life of godliness and virtue in their hearts and in their characters. 'O sir,' he said, 'you may give your sons the skin off your back, but they will not give you their confidence!' So had it been with Christian and his sons. He had never managed, even in his religion, to get into the confidence of his sons; but when their mother took them into her agonised confidence, from that day she was in all their confidences, good and bad. You who are in your children's confidences will pray in secret for my lonely friend with the skin off his back, will you not? that he may soon be able to call his sons together so as to start together on a new life of family love, and family trust, and family religion. That was a fine sight. Who will make a picture of it? This widow indeed at the head of her family council-table, and Matthew at the foot, and James and Joseph and Samuel all in their places. 'Come, my children, let us pack up that we may see your father!' Then did her children burst into tears for joy that the heart of their mother was so inclined.

From that first family council let us pass on to Christiana's last interview with her family and her other friends. Her biographer introduces her triumphant translation with this happy comment on the margin: 'How welcome is death to them that have nothing to do but die!' Well, that was exactly Christiana's case. She had so packed up at the beginning of her journey; she had so got and had so kept the confidences of all her sons; she had

seen them all so married in the Lord, and thus so settled in a life of godliness and virtue; she had, in short, lived the life of a widow indeed, till, when the post came for her, she had nothing left to do but just to rise up and follow him. His token to her was an arrow with a point sharpened with love, let easily into her heart, which by degrees wrought so effectually with her that at the time appointed she must be gone. We have read of arrows of death sharpened sometimes with steel and sometimes with poison; but this arrow, shot from heaven, was sharpened to a point with love. Indeed, that arrow, or the very fellow of it, had been shot into Christiana's heart long ago when she stood at that spot somewhat ascending where was a cross and a sepulchre; and, especially, ever since the close of Great-heart's great discourse on pardon by deed. For the hearing of that famous discourse had made her exclaim: 'Oh! Thou loving One, it makes my heart bleed to think that Thou shouldest bleed for me! Oh! Thou blessed One, Thou deservest to have me, for Thou hast bought me! Thou deservest to have me all, for Thou hast paid for me ten thousand times more than I am worth!' Now it was with all that love working effectually in her heart that Christiana called for her children to give them her blessing. And what a comfort it was to her to see them all around her with the mark of the kingdom on their foreheads, and with their garments white. 'My sons and my daughters,' she said, 'be you all ready against the time His post calls for you.' Then she called for Mr. Valiant-for-truth, and entreated him to have an eye on her

children, and to speak comfortably to them if at any time he saw them faint. And then she gave Mr. Standfast her ring. 'Behold,' she said, as Mr. Honest came in—'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!' Then Mr. Ready-to-halt came in, and then Mr. Despondency and his daughter Much-afraid, and then Mr. Feeble-mind. Now the day drew on that Christiana must be gone. So the road was full of people to see her take her journey. But, behold! all the banks beyond the river were full of horses and chariots which were come down from above to accompany her to the City gates, so she came forth and entered the river with a beckon of farewell to those that followed her to the river-side. The last word she was heard to say here was, 'I come, Lord, to be with Thee, and to bless Thee.'

But with all this, you must not suppose that this good woman, this mother in Israel, had forgotten her grandchildren. She would sooner have forgotten her own children. But she was too good a woman to forget either. For long ago, away back at the river on this side the Delectable Mountains, she had said to her four daughters—I must tell you exactly what she has said: 'Here,' she said, 'in this meadow there are cotes and folds for sheep, and an house is built here also for the nourishing and bringing up of those lambs, even the babes of those women that go on pilgrimage. Also there is One here who can have compassion and that can gather these lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom. This Man, she said, will house and harbour and succour the little ones, so that none of them shall be lacking in time to come. This Man, if any of them go

astray or be lost, He will bring them again, He will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen them that are sick. So they were content to commit their little ones to that Man, and all this was to be at the charge of the King, and so it was as a hospital to young children and orphans.'

And now I shall sum up my chief impressions of Christiana under the three heads of her mind, her heart, and her widowhood indeed.

1. The mother of Christian's four sons was a woman of real mind, as so many of the maidens, and wives, and widows of Puritan England and Covenanting Scotland were. You gradually gather that impression just from being beside her as the journey goes on. She does not speak much; but, then, there is always something individual, remarkable, and memorable in what she says. I have a notion of my own that Christiana must have been a reader of that princely Puritan, John Milton. And if that was so, that of itself would be certificate enough as to her possession of mind. There is always a dignity and a strength about her utterances that make us feel sure that she had always had a mind far above her neighbours, Mrs. Bat's-eyes, Mrs. Light-mind, and Mrs. Know-nothing. The first time she opens her mouth in our hearing she lets fall an expression that Milton had just made famous in his *Samson*:—

> 'Ease to the body some, none to the mind
> From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm
> Of hornets armed no sooner found alone,
> But rush upon me thronging, and present
> Times past, what once I was, and what am now.'

Nor can I leave this point without asserting it to

you that no church and no school of theology has ever developed the mind as well as sanctified the heart of the common people like the preaching of the Puritan pulpit. Matthew Arnold was not likely to over-estimate the good that Puritanism had done to England. Indeed, in his earlier writings he sometimes went out of his way to lament the hurt that the Puritan spirit had done to liberality of life and mind in his native land. But in his riper years we find him saying: 'Certainly,' he says, 'I am not blind to the faults of the Puritan discipline, but it has been an invaluable discipline for that poor, inattentive, and immoral creature, man. And the more I read history and the more I see of mankind, the more I recognise the value of the Puritan discipline.' And in that same Address he 'founded his best hopes for that so enviable and unbounded country in which he was speaking, America, on the fact that so many of its millions had passed through the Puritan discipline.' John Milton was a product of that discipline on the one hand, as John Bunyan was on the other. Christiana was another of its products in the sphere of the family, just as Matthew Arnold himself had some of his best qualities out of the same fruitful school.

2. Her heart, her deep, strong, tender heart, is present on every page of Christiana's noble history. Her heart keeps her often silent when the water in her eyes becomes all the more eloquent. When she does let her heart utter itself in words, her words are fine and memorable. As, for one instance, after Great-heart's discourse on redemption. 'O Mercy, that thy father and mother were here; yea,

and Mrs. Timorous also. Nay, I wish with all my heart now that here was Madam Wanton, too. Surely, surely, their hearts would be affected, nor could the fear of the one, nor the powerful lusts of the other, prevail with them to go home again, and to refuse to become good pilgrims.' But it was not so much what she said herself that brought out the depth and tenderness of Christiana's heart, it was rather the way her heart loosened other people's tongues. You must all have felt how some people's presence straitens your heart and sews up your mouth. While there are other people, again, whose simple presence unseals your heart and makes you eloquent. We ministers keenly feel that both in our public and in our private ministrations. There are people in whose hard and chilling presence we cannot even say grace as we should say it. Whereas, we all know other people, people of a heart, that is, whose presence somehow so touches our lips that we always when near them rise far above ourselves. Christiana did not speak much to her guides and instructors and companions, but they always spoke their best to her, and it was her heart that did it.

3. And then a widow indeed is just a true and genuine widow; a widow not in her name and in her weeds only, but still more in her deep heart, in her whole life, and in her garnered experience. 'Honour widows that are widows indeed. Now, she that is a widow indeed and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and in prayers night and day. Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have

lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.' These are the true marks and seals and occupations of a widow indeed. And if she has had unparalleled trials and irreparable losses, she has her corresponding consolations and compensations. For she has a freedom to go about and do good, a liberty and an experience that neither the unmarried maiden nor the married wife can possibly have. She can do multitudes of things that in the nature of things neither of them can attempt to do. Things that would be both unseemly and impossible for other women to say or to do are both perfectly seemly and wholly open for her to say and to do. Her widowhood is a sacred shield to her. Her sorrow is a crown of honour and a sceptre of authority to her. She is consulted by the young and the inexperienced, by the forsaken and by the forlorn, as no other human being ever is. She has come through this life, and by a long experience she knows this world and the hearts that fill it and make it what it is. A widow indeed can show a sympathy, and give a counsel, and speak with a weight of wisdom that one's own mother cannot always do. All you who by God's sad dispensation are now clothed in the 'white and wimpled folds' of widowhood, let your prayer and your endeavour day and night be that God would guide and enable you to be widows indeed. And, if you do, you shall want neither your occupation nor your honour.

L

THE ENCHANTED GROUND

Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel.'—*Balaam.*

'I SAW then in my dream that they went till they came into a certain country whose air naturally tended to make one drowsy if he came a stranger to it. And here Hopeful began to be very dull and heavy of sleep, wherefore he said unto Christian, I do now begin to grow so drowsy that I can scarcely hold up mine eyes; let us lie down here and take one nap.' And then when we turn to the same place in the Second Part we read thus: 'By this time they were got to the Enchanted Ground, where the air naturally tended to make one drowsy. And that place was all grown over with briars and thorns, excepting here and there, where was an enchanted arbour, upon which, if a man sits, or in which if a man sleeps, 'tis a question, say some, whether they shall ever rise or wake again in this world. Now, they had not gone far, but a great mist and darkness fell upon them all, so that they could scarce, for a great while, see the one the other. Wherefore they were forced for some time to feel for one another by words, for they walked not by sight. Nor was

there on all this ground so much as one inn or victualling-house wherein to refresh the feebler sort. Then they came to an arbour, warm, and promising much refreshing to the pilgrims, for it was finely wrought above head, beautified with greens, and furnished with couches and settles. It also had a soft couch on which the weary might lean. This arbour was called The Slothful Man's Friend, on purpose to allure, if it might be, some of the pilgrims there to take up their rest when weary. This, you must think, all things considered, was tempting. I saw in my dream also that they went on in this their solitary way till they came to a place at which a man is very apt to lose his way. Now, though when it was light, their guide could well enough tell how to miss those ways that led wrong, yet in the dark he was put to a stand. But he had in his pocket a map of all ways leading to or from the Celestial City, wherefore he struck a light (for he never goes also without his tinder-box), and takes a view of his book or map, which bids him be careful in that place to turn to the right-hand way. Then I thought with myself, who that goeth on pilgrimage but would have one of those maps about him, that he may look when he is at a stand, which is the way to take?'

1. 'But what is the meaning of all this?' asked Christiana of the guide. 'This Enchanted Ground,' —her able and experienced friend answered her, 'this is one of the last refuges that the enemy to pilgrims has; wherefore it is, as you see, placed almost at the end of the way, and so it standeth against us with the more advantage. For when,

thinks the enemy, will these fools be so desirous to sit down as when they are weary, and when so like to be weary as when almost at their journey's end? Therefore it is, I say, that the Enchanted Ground is placed so nigh to the land Beulah and so near the end of their race; wherefore let pilgrims look to themselves lest they fall asleep till none can waken them.' 'That masterpiece of Bunyan's insight into life, the Enchanted Ground,' says Mr. Louis Stevenson, 'where his allegory cuts so deep to people looking seriously on life.' Yes, indeed, Bunyan's insight into life! And his allegory that cuts so deep! For a neophyte, and one with little insight into life, or into himself, would go to look for this land of darkness and thorns and pitfalls, alternated with arbours and settles and soft couches —one new to life and to himself, I say, would naturally expect to see all that confined to the region between the City of Destruction and the Slough of Despond; or, at the worst, long before, and never after, the House Beautiful. But Bunyan looked too straight at life and too unflinchingly into his own heart to lay down his sub-Celestial lands in that way; and when we begin to look with a like seriousness on the religious life, and especially when we begin to look bold enough and deep enough into our own heart, then we too shall freely acknowledge the splendid master-stroke of Bunyan in the Enchanted Ground. That this so terrible experience is laid down almost at the end of the Celestial way—the blaze of light that pours upon our heads fairly startles us, while at the same time it comforts us and assures us. That this Enchanted

Ground, which has proved so fatal to so many false pilgrims, and so all but fatal to so many true pilgrims, should lie around the very borders of Beulah, and should be within all but eye-shot of the Celestial City itself,—that is something to be thankful for, and something to lay up in the deepest and the most secret place in our heart. That these pilgrims, after all their feastings and entertainments —after the Delectable Mountains and the House Beautiful—should all be plunged upon a land where there was not so much as a roadside inn, where the ways were so dark and so long that the pilgrims had to shout aloud in order to keep together, where, instead of moon or stars, they had to walk in the spark of a small tinder-box—what an encouragement and assurance to us is all that! That is no strange thing, then, that is now happening to us, when, after our fine communion season, we have suddenly fallen back into this deep darkness, and are cast into these terrible temptations, and feel as if all our past experiences and attainments and enjoyments had been but a self-delusion and a snare. That we should all but have fallen fast asleep, and all but have ceased both from watching against sin and from waiting upon God—well, that is nothing more than Hopeful himself would have done had he not had a wary old companion to watch over him, and to hold his eyes open. Let all God's people present who feel that they are nothing better of all they have enjoyed of Scriptures and sacraments, but rather worse; let all those who feel sure that they have wandered into a castaway land, so dark, so thorny, so miry, and so

lonely is their life—let them read this masterpiece of John Bunyan again and again and take heart of hope.

> 'When Saints do sleepy grow, let them come hither
> And hear how these two pilgrims talk together;
> Yea, let them hear of them, in any wise,
> Thus to keep ope their drowsy slumb'ring eyes;
> Saints' fellowship, if it be managed well,
> Keeps them awake, and that in spite of hell.'

2. But far worse than all its briars and thorns, far more fatal than all its ditches and pitfalls, were the enchanted arbours they came on here and there planted up and down that evil land. For those arbours are all of this fatal nature, that if a man falls asleep in any of them it arises a question whether he shall ever come to himself again in this world. Now, where there are no inns nor victualling-houses, no Gaius and no Mr. Mnason, what a danger all those ill-intended arbours scattered all up and down that country become! Well, then, the first enchanted arbour that the pilgrims came to was built just inside the borders of the land, and it was called The Stranger's Arbour—so many new-comers had lain down in it never to rise again. The young and the inexperienced, with those who were naturally of a believing, buoyant, easy mind, lay down in hundreds here. Hopeful's mind was naturally a mind of a soft and easy and self-indulgent cast; and had he been alone that day, or had he had for a companion a man of a less wary, less anxious, and less urgent mind than Christian was, Hopeful had taken a nap, as he so confidingly called it—a fatal nap in that arbour built by the

enemy of pilgrims, just on purpose for the young and the ignorant, the inexperienced and the self-indulgent.

3. The Slothful Man's Arbour has been already described. It was a warm arbour, and it promised much refreshing to the pilgrims. It also had in it a soft couch on which the weary might lean. 'Let us lie down here and take just one nap; we shall be refreshed if we take a nap!' 'Do you not remember,' said the other, 'that one of the shepherds bid us beware of the Enchanted Ground? And he meant by that that we should beware of sleeping; wherefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.' Now, what is a nap? And what is it to take a nap in our religion? The New Testament is full of warnings to those who read it and go by it—most solemn and most fearful warnings—against *sleep*. Now, have you any clear idea in your minds as to what this divinely denounced sleep is? Sleep is good and necessary in our bodily life. We would not live long if we did not sleep; we would soon go out of our mind; we would soon lose our senses if we did not sleep. Insomnia is one of the worst symptoms of our eager, restless, over-worked age. 'He giveth His beloved sleep'; and while they sleep their corn grows they know not how. But sleep in the great exhortation-passages of the Holy Scriptures does not mean rest and restoration; it means in all those passages insensibility, stupidity, danger, and death. In our nightly sleep, and in the measure of its soundness, we are utterly dead to the world around us. Men may come into our house and rob us of

our most precious possessions; they may even come up to our bed and murder us; our whole house may be in a blaze about us; we may only awaken to leap out of sleep into eternity. Now, we are all in a sleep like that in our souls. There is above us, and around us, and beneath us, and within us the eternal world, and we are all sound asleep; we are all stone-dead in the midst of it. Devils and wicked men are stealing our treasures for eternity, and we are sound asleep; hell is already kindling our bed beneath us, but we smell not its flames, or we only catch the first gasp of them before we make our everlasting bed among them. Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise and call upon thy God! When the guide shook Heedless and Too-bold off their settles in that slothful arbour, the one of them said with his eyes still shut, 'I will pay you when I take my money,' and the other said, 'I will fight so long as I can hold my sword in my hand.' At that one of the children laughed. 'What is the meaning of that?' asked Christiana. The guide said: 'They talk in their sleep.' So they did, and so do all men. For this whole world is full of settles on which men sleep and talk in their sleep. The newspapers to-morrow morning will all be full to overflowing of what men have said and written to-day and yesterday in their sleep. The shops and the banks and the exchanges will all be full of men making promises and settling accounts in their sleep. They will finger their purses, and grasp their swords, and all in their sleep. And

not children but devils will laugh as they hear the folly that falls from men's lips who are besotted with spiritual sleep and drugged with spiritual and fleshly sin. A dream cometh through the multitude of business. I had just got this length in this lecture the other night when I went to sleep. And in my sleep one of my people came to me and asked me if I could make it quite clear and plain to him what it would be for a man like him after a communion-time to begin to walk with God. And I just wish I could make the things of the Enchanted Ground as plain to myself and to you to-night as I was able to make a walk with God plain to myself and to my visitor that night in my ministerial dream. I often wish that my business mind worked as well in my study chair and in my pulpit as it sometimes does in my bed and in my sleep. 'Now, I beheld in my dream that they talked more in their sleep at this time than ever they did in all their journey. And being in a muse thereabout, the gardener said even to me: Wherefore musest thou at the matter? It is the nature of the fruit of the grapes of those vineyards to go down so sweetly as to cause the lips of them that are asleep to speak.' The reason my poor lips spake so sweetly about a walk with God that night must have been because I spent all the summer evening before walking with God and with you in the vineyards of Beulah.

4. Listen to Samson, shorn of his locks, as he shakes himself off a soft and sweetly-worked couch in The Sensual Man's Arbour:

'No, no;
It fits not; thou and I long since are twain;
Nor think me so unwary or accurst
To bring my feet again into the snare
Where once I have been caught; I know thy trains,
Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toils;
Thy fair enchanted cup and warbling charms
No more on me have power, their force is null'd;
So much of adder's wisdom have I learnt
To fence my ear against thy sorceries.
If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
Loved, honour'd, fear'd me, thou alone couldst hate me,
Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forego me;
How wouldst thou use me now, blind, and thereby
Deceivable, in most things as a child,
Helpless, thence easily contemn'd, and scorn'd,
And last neglected? How wouldst thou insult,
When I must live uxorious to thy will
In perfect thraldom! How again betray me,
Bearing my words and doings to the lords
To gloss upon, and censuring, frown or smile!
This jail I count the house of liberty
To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter.'

5. The love of money to some men is the root of all evil. There came once a youth to St. Philip Neri and, flushed with joy, told him that his parents after much entreaty had at length allowed him to study law. St. Philip was not a man of many words. 'What then?' the saint simply asked the shining youth. 'Then I shall become a lawyer!' 'And then?' pursued Philip. 'Then,' said the young man, 'I shall earn a nice sum of money, and I shall purchase a fine country house, procure a carriage and horses, marry a handsome and rich wife, and lead a delightful life!' 'And then?' 'Then,'—the youth reflected as death and eternity arose before his eyes, and from that day he began to take care of his immortal soul. Philip with one

word snatched that young man's soul off The Rich Man's Settle.

6. The Vain Man's Settle draws down many men to shame and everlasting contempt. Praise a vain man or a vain woman aright and enough and you will get them to do anything you like. Give a vain man sufficient publicity in your paper or on your platform and he will become a spy, a traitor, and cut-throat in your service. The sorcerer's cup of praise—keep it full enough in a vain man's hand, and he will sleep in the arbour of vanity till he wakens in hell. Madam Bubble, the arch-enchantress, knows her own, and she has, with her purse, her promotion, and her praise, bought off many a promising pilgrim.

7. And then she, by virtue of whose sorceries this whole land is drugged and enchanted, is such a bold slut that she will build a Sacred Arbour even, and will fill it full of religious enchantment for you rather than lose hold of you. She will consecrate places and persons and periods for you if your taste lies that way; she will build costly and stately churches for you; she will weave rich vestments and carve rich vessels; she will employ all the arts; she will even sanctify and set apart and seat aloft her holy men—what will she not do to please you, to take you, to intoxicate and enchant you? She will juggle for your soul equally well whether you are a country clown in a feeing-market or a fine lady of æsthetic tastes and religious sensibilities in the capital and the court. But I shall let Father Faber speak, who can speak on this subject both with authority and with attraction.

'She can open churches, and light candles on the altar, and intone *Te Deums* to the Majesty on high. She can pass into the beauty of art, into the splendour of dress, and into the magnificence of furniture. She can sit with high principles on her lips discussing a religious vocation and praising God and sanctity. On the benches of bishops and in the pages of good books you will find her, and yet she is all the while the same huge evil creature.' Yes; she is all the time the same Madam Bubble who offered to Standfast her body, her purse, and her bed.

Now, would you know for yourself, like the communicant who came to me in my sleep, how you are ever to get past all those arbours, and settles, and seats, and couches, with all their sweet sorceries and intoxicating enchantments—would you in earnest know that? Then study well the case of one Standfast. Especially the time when she who enchants this whole ground hereabouts set so upon that pilgrim. In one word, it was this: he remembered his Lord; and, like his Lord, he fell on his face; and as his Lord would have it, His servant's lips as they touched the ground touched also the healing plant haemony and he was saved.

'A small unsightly root,
But of divine effect.
Unknown, and like esteem'd, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon;
And yet more med'cinal is it than that moly
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave;
He call'd it haemony, and gave it me,
And bade me keep it as of sovran use
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew, blast, or damp,
Or ghastly furies' apparition.
And now I find it true; for by this means

I knew the foul enchantress, though disguised,
Enter'd the very lime-twigs of her spells,
And yet came off. If you have this about you
(As I will give you when you go) you may
Boldly assault the necromancer's hall:
Where if she be, with dauntless hardihood,
And brandished blade, rush on her, break her glass,
And shed her luscious liquor on the ground,
And seize her wand.'

Prayer, my sin-beset brethren, standfast prayer, is the otherwise unidentified haemony whose best habitat was the Garden of Gethsemane; and with that holy root in your heart and in your mouth, there is 'no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel.'

LI

THE LAND OF BEULAH

'Thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah.'
Isaiah.

THE first thing that John Bunyan tells us about the land of Beulah is this—that the shortest and the best way to the Celestial City lies directly through that land. The land of Beulah has its own indigenous inhabitants indeed. Old men dwell in the streets of Beulah, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. The streets of the city also are full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. The land of Beulah has its frequent visitors also, and its welcome guests from the regions above. Some of the shining ones come down from time to time and make a short sojourn in Beulah. The angels in heaven have such a desire to see the lands from which God's saints come up that at certain seasons all the suburbs of the Celestial City are full of those shining servants of God and of the Lamb.

But what made the dreamer to smile and to talk so in his sleep was when he saw that all the upward ways to the Celestial City ran through the land of Beulah. He saw also in his dream how all the pilgrims blamed themselves so bitterly now

because they had misspent so much of their time and strength in the ways below, and so had not come sooner to see and to taste this blessed land. But, at the same time, as it was, they all rejoiced with a great joy because that, after all their delays and all their wanderings, their way still led them through the borders of Beulah. Now, my dear fellow-communicants, how shall we find our way at once, and without any more wanderings, into that so desirable land? How shall we attain to walk its streets all the rest of our days with our staff in our hand? How shall we hope to see our boys and our girls playing in the streets of Beulah, and eating all their days of its sweet and its healing fruits? How shall we and our children with us henceforth escape the Slough of Despond, and Giant Despair's dungeon, and the Valley of the Shadow of Death? The word, my brethren, the answer to all that, is nigh unto us, even in our mouth and in our heart. For faith, simple faith, will do all that both for us and for our children beside us. A heart-feeding faith in God, in the word of God, and in the Son of God, will do it. Faith, and then obedience. For obedience, my brethren, is Beulah. All obedience is already Beulah. Holy obedience will bring the whole of Beulah into your heart and into mine at any moment. It is disobedience that makes so many of those who otherwise are true pilgrims to miss so much of the land of Beulah. Ask any affable old man with his staff in his hand for very age, and he will tell you that it was his disobedience that kept him so long out of the land of Beulah.

While, let any man, and above all, let any young man, begin early to live a life of believing obedience, and he will grow up and grow old and see his children's children playing around his staff in the streets of Beulah. Let any young man make the experiment for himself upon obedience and upon Beulah. Let him not too easily believe any dreamer or even any seer about obedience and about the land of Beulah. It is his own matter and not theirs; and let him make experiment upon it all for his own satisfaction and assurance. Let any young man, then, try prayer as his first step into obedience, and especially secret prayer. Let him shut his door to-night, and let him see if he is not already inside one of the gates of Beulah. Let him deny himself every day also, if it is only in a very little thing. Let him say sternly to his own heart every hour of temptation, No! never! and on the spot a sweet waft of Beulah's finest spices will fall upon his face. 'The ineffable joy of renouncing joy' will every day make the lonely wilderness of this world a constant Beulah to such a man. For, to live at all times, in all places, and in all things for other men, and never and in nothing for yourself—that is the deepest secret of Beulah. To say it, if need be, three times to-night on your face and in a sweat of blood, 'Not my will, but Thine be done!'—that will to-night turn the garden of Gethsemane itself into the very garden of Glory. Do you doubt it? Are you not yet able to believe it? Then hear about it from One who has Himself come through it. Hear His word upon the whole matter who is the Way, the

Truth, and the Life. 'Come unto Me,' says the King of Beulah, 'all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.' So after He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments and was set down again, He said unto them, 'Know ye what I have done to you? For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever. If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and will make Our abode with him. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.' And thus I saw in my dream that their way lay right through the land of Beulah, in which land they solaced themselves for a season.

2. 'They solaced themselves.' Now, solace is just the Latin *solatium*, which, again, is just a soothing, an assuaging, a compensation, an indemnification. Well, that land into which the pilgrims

had now come was very soothing to their ruffled spirits and to their weary hearts. It assuaged their many and sore griefs also. It more than compensated them for all their labours and all their afflictions. And it was a full indemnification to them for all that they had forsaken and lost both in beginning to be pilgrims and in enduring to the end. The children of Israel had their first solace in their pilgrimage at Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and threescore and ten palm-trees; and they encamped there by the waters. And then they had their last and crowning solace when the spies came back from Eshcol with a cluster of grapes that they bare between two upon a staff, with pomegranates and figs. And Moses kept solacing his charge all the way through the weary wilderness with such strong consolations as these: 'For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees; a land of oil-olive and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.' Our Lord spake solace to His doubting and fainting disciples also in many such words as these: 'Verily, I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.' The Mount of Transfiguration also was His

own Beulah-solace; and the Last Supper and the prayer with which it wound up were given to our Lord and to His disciples as a very Eshcol-cluster from the Paradise above. Now, I saw in my dream that they solaced themselves in the land of Beulah for a season. Yea, here they heard continually the singing of birds. (The Latin poets called the birds *solatia ruris*, because they refreshed and cheered the rustic labourers with their sweet singing.) And every day the flowers appeared in the earth, and the voice of the turtle was heard in the land. In this country the sun shineth night and day, for there is no night there.

3. 'In this country the sun shineth night and day.' How much Standfast must have enjoyed that land of light you may guess when you recollect that he came from Darkland, which lies in the hemisphere right opposite to the land of Beulah. In Darkland the sun never shines to be called sunshine at all. All the days of his youth, Standfast told his companions, he had sat beside his father and his mother in that obscure land where to his sorrow his father and his mother still sat. But in Beulah 'the rose of evening becomes silently and suddenly the rose of dawn.' This land lies beyond the Valley of the Shadow of Death, neither could they from this place so much as see Doubting Castle. Now, Doubting Castle is a dismal place for any soul of man to be shut up into. And in that dark hold there are dungeons dug for all kinds of doubting souls. There are dungeons dug for the souls of men whose doubts are in their intellects, as well as for those also whose doubts

arise out of their hearts. Some men read themselves into Doubting Castle, and some men sin and sell themselves to its giant. God casts some of His own children all their days into those dungeons as a punishment for their life of disobedience; He casts others down into chains of darkness because of their idleness and unfruitfulness. But Beulah is far away from Doubting Castle. Beulah is a splendid spot for a studious man to lodge in. For what a clear light shines night and day in Beulah! To what far horizons a man's eye will carry him in Beulah! What large speculations rise before him who walks abroad in Beulah! How clear the air is in Beulah, how clean the heart and how unclouded the eye of its inhabitants! The King's walks are in Beulah, and the arbours where He delighteth to be. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall be admitted to see God in the land of Beulah. In the land of Beulah the sun shall no more be thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory!

4. 'In this land also the contract between the bride and the bridegroom is renewed.' Now, there is no other day so bitter in any man's life as that day is on which his bridal contract is broken off. And it is the very perfection and last extremity of bitterness when his contract is broken off because of his own past life. Let all those, then, who would fain enter into that sweet contract think well about it beforehand. Let them look back into all their past life. For all their past

life will be sure to find them out on the day of their espousals. If they have their enemies—as all espoused men have—this is the hour and the power of their enemies. The day on which any man's espousals are published is a small and local judgment-day to him. For all the men, and, especially, all the women, who have ever been injured by him, or who have injured themselves upon him; all the men and all the women who for any reason, and for no reason, hate both him and his happiness,—their tongues and their pens will take no sleep till they have got his contract if they can, broken off. And even when the bridegroom is too innocent, or the bride too true, or God too good to let the contract continue long to be broken off, that great goodness of God and that great trust of his contracted bride will only make the bridegroom walk henceforth more softly and rejoice with more trembling. And that is a most excellent mind. I know no better mind in which any man, guilty or innocent, can enter on a married life. I sometimes tell the bridegrooms that I can take a liberty with to keep saying to themselves all the way up to the marriage altar the tenth verse of the 103rd psalm; as well as when they come up afterwards to the baptismal font: 'He hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us after our iniquities.' And it is surely Beulah itself, at its very best, it is surely Beulah above itself, when a happy bridegroom is full of that humble and happy mind, and when he is in one and the same moment reconciled both to his bride on earth and to his God and Father in heaven. In this

land, therefore, in the land of Beulah, the contract between the bride and the bridegroom is renewed; yea, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

5. The salaams and salutations also that they were met with as often as they went out to walk in the streets thereof were a constant surprise, satisfaction, and sweetness to the fearful pilgrims. No passer-by ever once frowned or scowled upon them because their faces were Zionward, as they do in our cities. No one ever treated them with scorn or contempt because they were poor or unlettered. No man's face either turned dark at them or was turned away from them as they passed up the street. They never, all the time they abode in Beulah, took to the lanes of the city to escape the unkind looks of any of its citizens. Great-heart's hand was never away from his helmet. His helmet was never well on his head. His always bare and unhelmeted head said to all the men of Beulah, I love and honour and trust you. You would not hurt a hair of my head. And so on, till all the streets of Beulah were one buzz of salutation, congratulation, and benediction. Here they heard voices from out of the city, loud voices, saying, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him. Here all the inhabitants of the country called them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, sought out, a city not forsaken.

6. Now, as they walked in this land they had more rejoicing than in parts more remote from the kingdom to which they were bound. And

still drawing nigh to that city they had yet a more perfect view thereof. It was builded of pearls and precious stones, also the street thereof was paved with gold, so that by reason of the natural glory of the city and the reflection of the sunbeams upon it, Christian with desire fell sick. Hopeful also had a fit or two of the same disease. Wherefore here they lay by it awhile, crying out because of their pangs, If you see my beloved, tell him that I am sick of love. There are in all good cases of recovery three successive stages of soul-sickness. True, soul-sickness always runs its own course, and it always runs its own course in its own order. This special sickness first shows itself when the soul becomes sick with sin. We have that sickness set forth in many a psalm, notably in the thirty-eighth psalm; and in a multitude of other scriptures, both old and new, this evil disease is dealt with if we had only the eyes and the heart to read such scriptures. The second stage of this sickness is when a sinner is not so much sick with the sin that dwelleth in him as sick of himself. Sinfulness in its second stage becomes so incorporate with the sinner's whole life—sin so becomes the sinner's very nature, and, indeed, himself,—that all his former loathing of sin passes over henceforth into loathing of himself. This is the most desperate stage in any man's sickness; but, bad as it is, incurable as it is, it must be passed into before the third stage of the healing process can either be experienced or understood. In the case in hand, by the time the pilgrims had come to Beulah they had all had their full share of sin and of themselves till they here entered on

an altogether new experience. 'Christian with desire fell sick,' we read, 'and Hopeful also had a fit or two of the same disease. Wherefore here they lay by it a while, crying out because of their pangs, If you see my beloved, tell him that I am sick of love.' David, Paul, Bernard, Bunyan himself, Rutherford, Brainerd, M'Cheyne, and many others crowd in upon the mind. I shall but instance John Flavel and Mrs. Jonathan Edwards, and so close. John Flavel being once on a journey set himself to improve the time by meditation, when his mind grew intent, till at length he had such ravishing tastes of heavenly joys, and such a full assurance of his interest therein, that he utterly lost the sight and sense of this world and all its concerns, so that for hours he knew not where he was. At last, perceiving himself to be faint, he sat down at a spring, where he refreshed himself, earnestly desiring, if it were the will of God, that he might there leave the world. His spirit reviving, he finished his journey in the same delightful frame, and all that night the joy of the Lord still overflowed him, so that he seemed an inhabitant of the other world. The only other case of love-sickness I shall touch on to-night I take from under the pen of a sin-sick and love-sick author, who has been truthfully described as 'one of the first, if not the very first, of the masters of human reason,' and, again, as 'one of the greatest of the sons of men.' 'There is a young lady in New-haven,' says Edwards, 'who is so loved of that Great Being who made and rules the world, that there are certain seasons in which this Great Being

in some way or other invisible comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, so that she hardly cares for anything but to meditate upon Him. She looks soon to dwell wholly with Him, and to be ravished with His love and delight for ever. Therefore, if you present all this world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards it and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and a singular piety in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do anything wrong or sinful, if you would give her the whole world. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some one invisible always communing with her.' And so on, all through her seraphic history. 'Now, if such things are too enthusiastic,' says the author of *A Careful and a Strict Enquiry into the Freedom of the Will*, 'if such things are the offspring of a distempered brain, let my brain be possessed evermore of that blessed distemper! If this be distraction, I pray God that the whole world of mankind may all be seized with this benign, meek, beneficent, beatific, glorious distraction! The peace of God that passeth all understanding; rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory; God shining in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ; with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of God, and being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord; being called out of darkness into

marvellous light, and naving the day-star arise in our hearts! What a sweet distraction is that! And out of what a heavenly distemper and out of what a sane enthusiasm has all that come to us!'

'More I would speak: but all my words are faint;
Celestial Love, what eloquence can paint?
No more, by mortal words, can be expressed,
But all Eternity shall tell the rest.'

LII

THE SWELLING OF JORDAN

The swelling of Jordan.'—*Jeremiah.*

'FORE-FANCY your deathbed,' says Samuel Rutherford. 'Take an essay,' he says in his greatest book, that perfect mine of gold and jewels, *Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himself*—'Take an essay and a lift at your death, and look at it before it actually comes to your door.' And so we shall. Since it is appointed to all men once to die, and after death the judgment; and since our death and our judgment are the only two things that we are absolutely sure about in our whole future, we shall henceforth fore-fancy those two events much more than we have done in the past. And to assist us in that; to quicken our fancy, to kindle it, to captivate it, and to turn our fancy wholly to our salvation, we have all the entrancing river-scenes in the *Pilgrim's Progress* set before us; a succession of scenes in which Bunyan positively revels in his exquisite fancies, clothing them as he does, all the time, in language of the utmost beauty, tenderness, pathos, power, and dignity. Let us take our stand, then, on the bank of the river and watch how pilgrim

after pilgrim behaves himself in those terrible waters. We are all voluntary spectators to-night, but we shall all be compulsory performers before we know where we are.

1. On entering the river even Christian suddenly began to sink. Fore-fancy that. All the words he spake still tended to discover that he had great horror of mind and hearty fears that he would die in that river; here also he was much in the troublesome thoughts of the sins he had committed both since and before he began to be a pilgrim. Fore-fancy that also, all you converted young men. Hopeful, therefore, had much to do to keep his brother's head above water; yea, sometimes he would be quite gone down, and then in a while he would rise up again half-dead. Then I saw in my dream that Christian was in a muse a while; to whom also Hopeful added this word, 'Be of good cheer; Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.' And with that Christian broke out with a loud voice, 'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee.' Then they both took courage and the enemy was after that as still as a stone till they were gone over. Fore-fancy that also. There is one other thing out of that crossing that I hope I shall remember when I am in the river: 'Be of good cheer,' said Hopeful to his sinking fellow—'Be of good cheer, my brother, I feel the bottom, and it is good.' 'Hold His hand fast,' wrote Samuel Rutherford to Lady Kenmure. 'He knows all the fords. You may be ducked in His company but never drowned. Put

in your foot, then, and wade after Him. And be sure you set your feet always upon the stepping-stones.' Yes; fore-fancy those stepping-stones, and often practise your feet upon them before the time.

2. 'Good woman,' said the post to Christiana, the wife of Christian the pilgrim; 'Hail, good woman, I bring thee tidings that the Master calleth for thee, and expecteth thee to stand in His presence in clothes of immortality within this ten days.' Fore-fancy that also. Now the day was come that she must be gone. And so the road was full of people to see her take her journey. But, behold, all the banks beyond the river were full of horses and chariots which were come down from above to accompany her to the city gate. So she came forth and entered the river with a beckon of fare-well to those that followed her to the river-side. And thus she went and entered in at the gate with all the ceremonies of joy that her husband had done before her. Fore-fancy, if you can, some of those ceremonies of joy.

3. When Mr. Fearing came to the river where was no bridge, there again he was in a heavy case. Now, he said, he should be drowned for ever and never see that Face with comfort he had come so many miles to behold. And here also I took notice of what was very remarkable; the water of that river was lower at this time than ever I saw it in all my life. So he went over at last not much above wet-shod. Fore-fancy and fore-arrange, if it be possible, for a passage like that. When he was going up to the gate Mr. Great-heart began to take

his leave of him, and to wish him a good reception above. 'I shall,' he said, 'I shall.' Be fore-assured, also, of a reception like that.

4. In process of time there came a post to the town again, and his business was this time with Mr. Ready-to-halt. So he inquired him out and said to him, 'I am come to thee in the name of Him whom thou hast loved and followed, though upon crutches. And my message is to tell thee that He expects thee at His table to sup with Him in His kingdom the next day after Easter.' After this Mr. Ready-to-halt called for his fellow-pilgrims and told them, saying, 'I am sent for, and God shall surely visit you also. These crutches,' he said, 'I bequeath to my son that he may tread in my steps, with a hundred warm wishes that he may prove better than I have done.' When he came to the brink of the river, he said, 'Now I shall have no more need of these crutches, since yonder are horses and chariots for me to ride on.' The last words he was heard to say were, 'Welcome life!' Let all ready-to-halt hearts fore-fancy all that.

5. Then Mr. Feeble-mind called for his friends and told them what errand had been brought to him, and what token he had received of the truth of the message. 'As for my feeble mind,' he said, 'that I shall leave behind me, for I shall have no need of that in the place whither I go. When I am gone, Mr. Valiant, I desire that you would bury it in a dunghill.' This done, and the day being come in which he was to depart, he entered the river as the rest. His last words were, 'Hold

out faith and patience.' Fore-fancy such an end as that to your feeble mind also.

6. Did you ever know a family, or, rather, the relics of a family, where there was just a decrepit old father and a lone daughter left to nurse him through his second childhood? All his other children are either married or dead; but both marriage and death have spared Miss Much-afraid to watch over the dotage-days of Mr. Despondency; till one summer afternoon the old man fell asleep in his chair to waken where old men are for ever young. And in a day or two there were two new graves side by side in the old churchyard. Even death could not divide this old father and his trusty child. And so when the time was come for them to depart, they went down together to the brink of the river. The last words of Mr. Despondency were, 'Farewell night and welcome day.' His daughter went through the river singing, but none could understand what it was she said. Fore-fancy that, all you godly old men, with a daughter who has made a husband and children to herself of her old father.

7. As I hear Old Honest shouting 'Grace reigns!' I always remember what a lady told me about a saying of her poor Irish scullery-girl. The mistress and the servant were reading George Eliot's Life together in the kitchen, and when they came to her deathbed, on the pillow of which Thomas A'Kempis lay open, 'Mem,' said the girl, 'I used to read that old book in the convent; but it is a better book to live upon than to die upon.' Now, that was exactly Old Honest's mind. He lived

upon one book, and then he died upon another. He lived according to the commandments of God, but he died according to the comforts of the Gospel. Now, we read in his history how that the river at that time overflowed its banks in some places. But Mr. Honest had in his lifetime spoken to one Good-conscience to meet him at the river, the which he also did, and lent him his hand, and so helped him over. All the same, the last words of Mr. Honest still were, 'Grace reigns!' And so he left the world. Fore-fancy whether or no you are making, as one has said, 'an assignation with terror' at that same river-side.

8. Standfast was the last of the pilgrims to go over the river. Standfast was left longest on this side the river because his Master could best trust him here. His Master had to take away many of His other servants from the evil to come, but He could trust Standfast. You can safely trust a man who takes to his knees in every hour of temptation, as Standfast was wont to do. 'This river,' he said, 'has been a terror to many. Yea, the thoughts of it have often frighted me also. The waters, indeed, are to the palate bitter, and to the stomach cold; yet the thoughts of what I am going to, and of the conduct that awaits me on the other side, doth lie as a glowing coal at my heart. I see myself now at the end of my journey, and my toilsome days are all ended. I am going now to see that head that was crowned with thorns, and that face that was spit upon for me. His name has been to me as a civet-box, yea, sweeter than all perfumes. His word I did use to gather for my food, and for antidotes

against my faintings. He has held me up, and I have kept myself from mine iniquities. Yea, my steps hath He strengthened in the way.' Now, while he was thus in discourse his countenance changed, his strong man bowed down under him, and after he had said, 'Take me, for I come to Thee,' he ceased to be seen of them. Fore-fancy, if you have the face, an end like that for yourself.

This, then, is how Christian and Hopeful and Christiana and Old Honest and all the rest did in the swelling river. But the important point is, How WILL YOU DO? Have you ever fore-fancied how you will do? Have you ever, among all your many imaginings, imagined yourself on your death-bed? Have you ever thought you heard the doctor whisper, 'To-night'? Have you ever lain low in your bed and listened to the death-rattle in your own throat? And have you still listened to the awful silence in the house after all was over? Have you ever shot in imagination the dreadful gulf that stands fixed between life and death, and between time and eternity? Have you ever tried to get a glimpse beforehand of your own place where you will be an hour after your death, when they are putting the grave-clothes on your still warm body, and when they are measuring your corpse for your coffin? Where will you be by that time? Have you any idea? Can you fancy it? Did you ever try? And if not, why not? 'My lord,' wrote Jeremy Taylor to the Earl of Carbery, when sending him the first copy of the *Holy Dying*,—'My lord, it is a great art to die well, and that art is to be learnt by men in

health; for he that prepares not for death before his last sickness is like him that begins to study philosophy when he is going to dispute publicly in the faculty. The precepts of dying well must be part of the studies of them that live in health, because in other notices an imperfect study may be supplied by a frequent exercise and a renewed experience; but here, if we practise imperfectly once, we shall never recover the error, for we die but once; and therefore it is necessary that our skill be more exact since it cannot be mended by another trial.' How wise, then, how far-seeing, how practical, and how urgent is the prophet's challenge and demand: 'How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?'

1. Well, then, let us be practical before we close, and let us descend to particulars. Let us take the prophet's question and run it through some parts and some practices of our daily life as already dying men. And, to begin with, I have such a great faith in good books, whether we are to live or die, that I am impelled to ask you all at this point, and under shelter of this plain-spoken prophet, What books have you laid in for your deathbed, and for the weeks and months and even years before your deathbed? What do you look forward to be reading when Jordan is beginning to swell and roll for you and to leap up toward your doorstep? If you get good from good books—everybody does not—but supposing you are one of those who do, what books can you absolutely count upon, without fail, to put you in the best possible frame for the river, and for the convoy across, and for the ceremonies of joy on

the other side? What special Scriptures will you have read every day to you? 'Read,' said John Knox to his weeping wife, 'read where I first cast my anchor.' An old lady I once knew used to say to me at every visit, 'The Fifty-first Psalm.' She was the daughter of a Highland minister, and the wife of a Highland minister, and the mother of a Highland minister, and of an elder to boot. 'The Fifty-first Psalm,' she said, and sometimes, 'One of Hart's hymns also.' What is your favourite psalm and hymn? Mr. James Taylor of Castle Street has several large-type libraries in his catalogue. Mr. Taylor might start a much worse paying speculation than a large-type library for the river-side; or, some select booklets for deathbeds. The series might well open with 'The Ninetieth Psalm' in letters an inch deep. Scholars die as well as illiterates, and there might be provided for them, among other things, *The Phædo* in two languages, Plato's and Jowett's. Then *The Seven Sayings from the Cross.* Bellarmine's *Art of Dying Well* would stand well beside John Bunyan's *Dying Sayings.* And, were I the editor, I would put in Bishop Andrewes' *Private Devotions,* if only for my own last use. Then Richard Baxter's *Saint's Rest,* and John Howe's Platonico-Puritan book, *Blessedness of the Righteous.* Then Bernard's 'New Jerusalem,' 'The Sands of Time are sinking,' 'Rock of Ages,' and such like. These are some of the little books I have within reach of my bed against the hour when the post blows his first horn for me. You might tell me some of your deathbed favourites.

2. Who will be your most welcome minister

during your last days on earth? For whom would you send to-night if the post were suddenly to sound his horn at your side on your way home from church? I can well believe it would not be your own minister. I have known fathers and mothers in this congregation to send for other ministers than their own minister when terrible trouble came upon them, and both my conscience and my common sense absolutely approved of the step they took. Five students were once sitting and talking together in a city in which there was to be an execution to-morrow morning. They were talking about the murderer who was to be executed in the morning, and about the minister he had sent for to come to see him. And, like students, they began to put it to one another—Suppose you were to be executed to-morrow, for what minister in the city, or even in the whole land, would you send? And, like students again, they said—Let each one write down on a piece of paper the name of the minister he would choose to be beside him at the last, and we shall see each man's last choice. They did so, when to their astonishment it was discovered that they had all written the same minister's name! I do not know that they all went to his church every Sabbath while they were young and well, and not yet under sentence of death. I do not think they did. For when I was in his church there was only a handful of old and decayed-looking people in it. The chief part of the congregation seemed to me to be a charity school. And I gathered from all that a lesson—several lessons, and this among the rest—that crowded passages do not always wait upon the

best pastors; and this also, that a waft of death soon discovers to us a true minister from an incompetent and a counterfeit minister.

3. Writing to one of his correspondents about his correspondent's long-drawn-out deathbed, Samuel Rutherford said to him, 'It is long-drawn-out that you may have ample time to go over all your old letters and all your still unsettled accounts before you take ship.' Have you any such old letters lying still unanswered? Have you any such old accounts lying still unsettled? Have you made full reparation and restitution for all that you and yours have done amiss? Fore-fancy that you will soon be summoned into His presence who has said: 'Therefore, if thou bring thy gift before the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him.' You know all about Zacchaeus. I need not tell his story over again. But as I write these lines I take up a London newspaper and my eyes light on these lines: 'William Avary was a man of remarkable gifts, both of mind and character. He dedicated the residue of his strength wholly to works of piety. In middle age he failed in business, and in his old age, when better days came, he looked up such of his old creditors as could be found and divided among them a sum of several thousand pounds.' Look up such of your old creditors as you can find, and that not in matters of money alone. And, be sure you begin to do it

now, before the horn blows. For, as sure as you take your keys and open your old repositories, you will come on things you had completely forgotten that will take more time and more strength, ay, and more resources, than will then be at your disposal. Even after you have begun at once and done all that you can do, you will have to do at last as Samuel Rutherford told George Gillespie to do: 'Hand over all your bills, paid and unpaid, to your Surety. Give Him the keys of the drawer, and let Him clear it out for Himself after you are gone.'

4. And then, pray often to God for a clear mind between Him and you, and for a quick, warm, and heaven-hungry heart at the last. And take a promise from those who watch beside your bed that they will not drug and stupefy you even though you should ask for it. Whatever your pain, and it is all in God's hand, make up your mind, if it be possible, to bear it. It cannot be greater than the pain of the cross, and your Saviour would not touch their drugs, however well-intended. He determined to face the swelling of Jordan and to enter His Father's house with an unclouded mind. Try your very uttermost to do the same. I cannot believe that the thief even would have let the gall so much as touch his lips after Christ had said to him, 'To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise!' Well, if your mind was ever clear and keen, let it be at its clearest and its keenest at the last. Let your mind and your heart be full of repentance, and faith, and love, and hope, and all such saving graces, and let them all be at their fullest and brightest exercise,

at that moment. Be on the very tip-toe of expectation as the end draws near. Another pang, another gasp, one more unutterable sinking of heart and flesh as if you were going down into the dreadful pit—and then the abundant entrance, and the beatific vision! What wilt thou do then? What wilt thou say then? Hast thou thy salutation and thy song ready? And what will it be?

Edinburgh: T. and A. CONSTABLE
Printers to Her Majesty

Fifteenth Thousand. Post 8vo, antique laid paper, cloth extra. Price 2s. 6d.

FIRST SERIES.

Bunyan Characters.

LECTURES DELIVERED IN ST. GEORGE'S FREE CHURCH, EDINBURGH: BY ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D.

"In the hands of some preachers or lecturers, Bunyan's characters would have become caricatures; but here they are delineated with a master-hand. The author does not treat these characters as mythical; to him they are living personalities, the representatives of many to-day whom we recognise either as friends or foes. We feel perfectly safe in the hands of an author who can quote most approvingly such divines as Goodwin, Owen, and Rutherford, and whose soul revels in Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*. All lovers of the immortal allegory should get these *Bunyan Characters*, especially ministers, who would know men, and be soul-winners. Having read this book from cover to cover, we can say, as Christian said when he left the gate of the Interpreter's house, 'Rare and profitable.'"—*Sword and Trowel.*

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

OLIPHANT ANDERSON & FERRIER

And all Booksellers.

Post 8vo, on antique laid paper, cloth extra. Price 2s. 6d.

The Life and Letters of James Renwick, the Last Scottish Martyr.

BY THE REV. W. H. CARSLAW, M.A., HELENSBURGH.

With Facsimile of one of his Letters.

"Renwick was a strange and interesting figure in the annals of the Scottish Church, and this tribute to his memory will find many willing readers."—*Scottish Leader.*

"The first complete edition of Renwick's letters."—*North British Daily Mail.*

"The letters reveal a singularly religious and devout spirit, and give us a striking insight into the sweetness and light that existed in the rugged depths of these stern and uncompromising pillars of the Covenant."—*Scottish Weekly.*

"James Renwick's letters were greatly in need of re-editing, and Mr. Carslaw has proved himself the man to do it. He has spared no pains, for he is enthusiastic in the subject. And his pains have been well rewarded. An enormous number of disfiguring errors have been removed; and now the letters are offered to us in a shape and condition that is worthy. The story of the life is interwoven with them, so that one may read the history of time as well as the spiritual history of the man who lived in it. The volume is very handsomely produced, and there is an excellent facsimile of one of Renwick's letters."—*Expository Times.*

"The biographical portions are written in a perspicuous, energetic, and graceful style, and Mr. Carslaw has not allowed his enthusiasm for Renwick to interfere to any extent with the requirements of historical accuracy."—*Aberdeen Journal.*

"The most complete yet published of the correspondence of this noble and manly Scotchman."—*Govan Press.*

"The Rev. Mr. Carslaw has skilfully interweaved the martyr's letters with the details of his life, and produced a thrilling picture of bloody and bygone days."—*Dumfries Courier.*

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

OLIPHANT ANDERSON & FERRIER

And all Booksellers.

Post 8vo, on antique laid paper, cloth extra. Price 2s. 6d.

311

The Covenanters of the Merse,

their History and Sufferings, as found in the Records of that Time.

By the Rev. J. WOOD BROWN, M.A., Gordon.

"Mr. Brown has not been content to chronicle still surviving traditions of the Covenanting period. He has gone to the historical records of the time, and his researches have been abundantly rewarded; so much so that the volume he has written, modest though it be in size and scope, forms a not unimportant addition to the interesting Border literature of the period."—*Scotsman.*

"Wherever the heroic witness of the Covenanters is appreciated this book will be warmly welcomed."—*Sword and Trowel.*

"Mr. Wood Brown has gathered the scattered records of the district with a loving hand."—*British Weekly.*

"A book which treats of the Covenanters is always sure to gain a respectful hearing. When to the merits of its subject such a volume adds clearness of style and an orderly presentation of facts, it is safe of a fair popularity. Mr. Brown writes well and clearly, not without a certain picturesqueness, which should recommend his book."—*Glasgow Herald.*

"Mr. Brown has rendered a service to the student of history which deserves grateful acknowledgment."—*Aberdeen Journal.*

EDINBURGH AND LONDON
OLIPHANT ANDERSON & FERRIER
And all Booksellers.

Crown 8vo, Cloth, Price 1s. 6d. each.

"*The Call of the Cross*,"

By Rev. GEORGE D. HERRON, D.D.

"*The Larger Christ*,"

By Rev. GEORGE D. HERRON, D.D.

The Glasgow Herald says:—"Striking and valuable utterances on religious themes of the highest importance by an American preacher. They reveal in their author a rare combination of intellectual force and inward spiritual experience, and they mark him out as an emancipated man, bound by no theological system, but one of those modern prophets of insight, who have, as Principal Fairbairn says, re-discovered Christ. Dr Herron preaches 'a larger Christ' than the theologian. The centre of gravity with him is the Incarnation. That fact carries with it the vision of redeemed humanity. The Cross was inevitable to the Christ living in this world. It involves the gospel of the Dying Self, and it means that 'every living life is a continuous resurrection.' Bracing, manly, eloquent, and practical, these sermons introduce us to an American preacher whose preaching comes near that of Phillips Brooks, and that is the highest we can say of it. Messrs Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier have done well to give us a British edition of sermons which deserve to be widely known."

The Magazine of Christian Literature says:—"The author writes at white-heat. The burden of the Lord is upon his soul. He has something to say and he says it. His style is terse and direct. He has mastered the art of verbal economy. No modern writer has stirred us more deeply than this author. We commend the book to every devout Christian who desires a larger view of Christ and His redemptive work."

Rev. John Henry Barrows, D.D. says:—"It is a fresh, strong, prophetic voice, calling the Church to larger views and more complete Christliness. It will have many echoes and eternal and wide-reaching results."

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

OLIPHANT ANDERSON & FERRIER

And all Booksellers.

Crown 8vo, antique paper, cloth, 1s. 6d.

The Young Preacher.

By THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.,

Late Pastor of Lafayette Avenue Church, Brooklyn.

"The ripe fruit of a long experience in the ministry. We have many books on preaching and pastoral work, but for brevity, perspicuity, and spirituality, this book takes a front rank. As to who should be ministers, how they ought to preach and carry on pastoral work, Dr Cuyler has most excellent counsel to give. We earnestly advise all divinity students and young ministers to get this book and make it their *vade mecum*. We thank Dr Cuyler for the helps he has given young preachers to become above all things *winners of souls*. 'Lungs and legs' are needed for preaching and pastoral work, but so is 'fervency of spirit.'"—*British Messenger.*

"A veteran's advice to recruits. Full of grace and 'grit' and 'go.' The cheery doctor chats away in charming style, convincing you almost before you are aware of it. Sound, shrewd common-sense and solid godliness combine to make a fine compact volume, running over with good practical advice to young preachers."—*Sword and Trowel.*

"Dr Cuyler is always alive and fresh."—*The Sunday School.*

"Will at once take high rank amongst its class, and prove of permanent value."—*Scottish Leader.*

"A copy of this small volume put into the hand of every divinity student in the country might save him many a mistake in the future."—*Glasgow Herald.*

"A capital little book, interesting from cover to cover."—*Arbroath Herald.*

"The Doctor shows himself a past master in pastoral work and Gospel preaching. His little book is replete with sound sense and practical suggestion."—*Christian.*

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

OLIPHANT ANDERSON & FERRIER

And all Booksellers.

314

Small Crown 8vo, on antique laid paper, cloth extra.
Price 2s. 6d.

The Holy War.

BY JOHN BUNYAN.

With Prefatory Note by the REV. ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D., *St. George's Free Church, Edinburgh, and Frontispiece by* MRS. TRAQUAIR.

"A most delightful edition of the *Holy War*, which will, we are sure, be warmly welcomed. . . . Nothing better in its own line could be imagined."—*British Weekly.*

"The issue of the present neatly-got-up edition offers an excellent opportunity for those who have not yet made its acquaintance to study this great Puritan classic."—*Christian World.*

"An exceedingly well-printed edition of a book which is second only in interest to *The Pilgrim's Progress.*—*Literary World.*

"A more pleasantly readable copy of this immortal romance could not be desired."—*Glasgow Herald.*

"Perhaps the most surprising thing about the book is its price. Such a book as this used to cost 5s. always."—*Expository Times.*

"Who, if they did but see it, would be without Messrs. Oliphant's dainty and cheap edition with its antique title-page, and its symbolic frontispiece, and its prefatory note by Dr. Alex. Whyte?"—*Primitive Methodist Magazine.*

"For book-lover and student we do not know of a more desirable edition of a work which is not the best of its kind in the language only because Bunyan also wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress.*"—*Westmoreland Gazette.*

"The prettiest little edition of this immortal classic we have ever seen."—*Methodist Times.*

EDINBURGH AND LONDON
OLIPHANT ANDERSON & FERRIER
And all Booksellers.

PR
3332
W69

Whyte, Alexander
Bunyan characters

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY